

**LEGAL ASSISTANT
PROGRAM**

Needs Assessment

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The purpose of this report is to review current industry needs and educational responses related to the field of legal assisting, and to obtain ABA approval of the Legal Assistant program.
- The Legal Assistant program, leading to either a certificate or an associate degree, is designed to provide the legal profession with qualified para-professionals who will perform legal research, aid in discovery, and analyze evidence in preparation for litigation in the various court systems at the local, state, and national levels, and in private law firms or related legal businesses.
- Enrollment in the LGL program increased steadily since its inception in academic year 1986-87, with a dramatic increase in student headcount (duplicated) from academic year 1989-90 to 1990-91. However, both enrollment and credit hours have remained at a steady level since academic year 1990-91.
- A telephone survey of 108 employers in Southeast Michigan was conducted in August, 1994. Thirty-eight percent of the employers hire legal assistants, and 62 % do not.
- The largest group of employers contacted feel that future employment for legal assistants in their organization is good (39%). Employer survey results indicate that students have the greatest chance for employment in private law firms (Excellent 20%, Good 40%).
- Employers rated file management (78%) as the most important of all technical skills for legal assistants, while they rated the ability to work as a team member, good listening skills, and good organizational skills as the most important personal skills for employees to possess.
- Students are the most satisfied with the instructors in the program, while they are the least satisfied with the frequency of class offerings.
- Students indicated that they would like to see the following specialized courses integrated into the Legal Assistant program: family law, legal writing, probate law, more legal terminology courses, criminal law, immigration law, real estate law, and bankruptcy.
- *Career Information Center* and *MOIS* data indicate that employment outlook in the nation and in Michigan is expected to increase much faster than the average for all occupations through the year 2000.
- Findings indicate that there is no clear-cut path of advancement for legal assistants. As legal assistants become experienced, their employers usually give them additional responsibilities and increased wages.
- A career in legal assisting requires a high school diploma and specialized training in a two-year or four-year college. The *Career Information Center* and the *Occupational Outlook Handbook* advise students to take courses in business law, legal procedures, legal terminology, personal management, finance, law office management, accounting, insurance, torts, legal research techniques, and courses covering specialized areas of the law.
- There were over 600 formal paralegal training programs offered nationwide by four-year colleges and universities, law schools, community and junior colleges, business schools, and proprietary schools in 1993. At that time, 177 programs had been approved by the American Bar Association. Although this approval is neither required nor sought by many programs, graduation from an ABA approved program can enhance one's employment opportunities.

OAKLAND COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Legal Assistant Program

Needs Assessment

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report is to review current industry needs and educational responses related to the field of legal assisting. This report was initiated at the request of the Program Coordinator, Sarah Keidan, in order to comply with the American Bar Association (ABA) guidelines for ABA approval of the Legal Assistant program. The report includes a literature review, data supplied by the U.S. Department of Labor, Michigan Occupational Information System (MOIS), information compiled from telephone interviews with industry experts, and an examination of related programs in other higher education institutions. Phone surveys of employers in the legal industry and students who have recently enrolled in Legal Assistant courses at Oakland Community College (OCC) were conducted. Responses from the College's ongoing *Graduate Follow-Up Survey* were also analyzed.

Description of Existing Program

Legal Assistant Program

The Legal Assistant program (LGL), leading to either a certificate or an associate degree, is designed to provide the legal profession with qualified para-professionals who will perform legal research, aid in discovery, and analyze evidence in preparation for litigation in the various court systems at the local, state, and national levels, and in private law firms or related legal businesses. The associate degree includes a total of 62 credits, while the certificate requires 40 credit hours to complete. There is a Legal Assistant Internship (LGL 251) where the student works in a law office or legal environment on a supervised special project which relates directly to the student's career goals. The internship consists of a minimum of 135 hours on the project. Also included in the program as major requirements are the following courses: Legal Research I and II (LGL 200 & LGL 203), Discovery (LGL 201), Litigation (LGL 202), Substantive Law (LGL 204), Preparation of Evidence (LGL 205), and Trial Preparation (LGL 206)(see Appendix A).

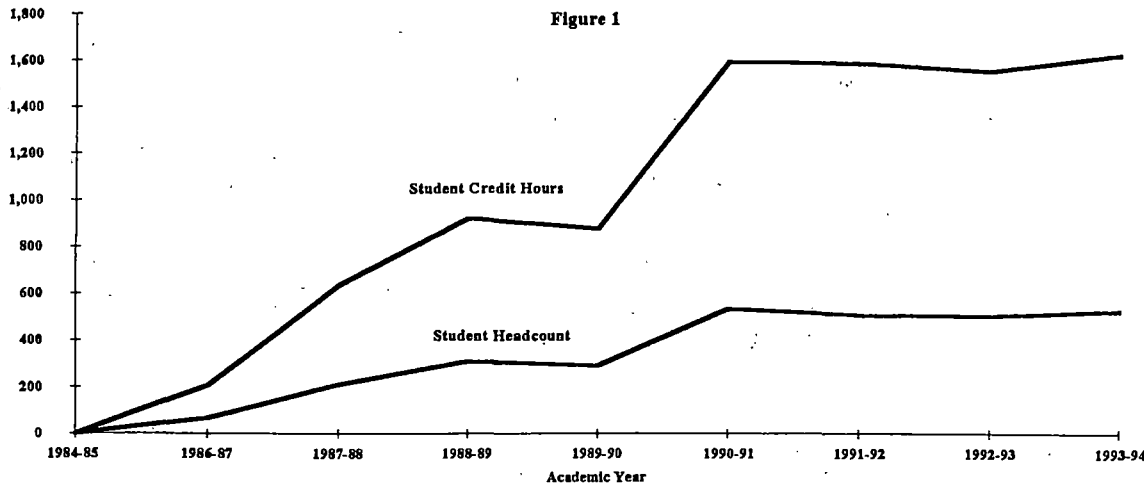
Enrollment in the LGL program increased steadily since its inception in academic year 1986-87, with a dramatic increase in student headcount (duplicated) from academic year 1989-90 to 1990-91 (see Table 1 and Figure 1). However, both enrollment and credit hours have remained at a steady level

since academic year 1990-91. As illustrated in the *1994 Student and Financial Data Book* (prepared by the Office of Institutional Planning & Analysis) (Appendix C), there has been a 680.6% increase in student headcount (duplicated), and a 689.8% increase in student credit hours in LGL courses over the last eight years (1986-1994). The LGL program has graduated approximately 120 students thus far.

Table 1
Trends in Annual Student Headcount and Annual Student Credit Hours*
Legal Assistant Courses

Table 1 and Figure 1 depict total annual student enrollment (duplicated headcount) and total student credit hours for an eight year period. Data is based on the official count date for each LGL course which was offered throughout the academic year.

	1984-85	**	1986-87	1987-88	1988-89	1989-90	1990-91	1991-92	1992-93	1993-94	Percent Change Eight Year
Student Headcount	0	**	67	211	308	289	534	506	500	523	680.6
Student Credit Hours	0.0	**	205.0	633.0	919.0	873.0	1595.0	1585.0	1549.0	1619.0	689.8



*Students represent annual duplicated headcount.
 ** Data for academic year 1985-86 is not available.

The LGL program is assisted by an Advisory Council which consists of 15 individuals from the public and private sector, including practicing lawyers, legal assistants, and OCC faculty and staff.

Description of Occupation

According to the *Occupational Outlook Handbook, May 1994*, paralegals held 95,000 jobs nationwide in 1992, with private law firms employing the vast majority. In Michigan, *MOIS* indicates that there were 1,250 legal assistants in 1988. Legal assistants perform many of the same tasks as lawyers, except for those tasks considered to be the practice of law. Most legal assistants have a high school diploma and specialized training, in a two or four year college. There are several other titles for this profession which include Paralegal, Paralegal Assistant, Paralegal Aide, Legal Technician, and

Legal Aide. The Legal Assistant program is concisely defined by the *Classification of Instructional Programs (22.0103)* as:

An instructional program that prepares individuals to perform research, drafting, investigatory, record-keeping and related administrative functions under the supervision of an attorney. Includes instruction in legal research, drafting legal documents, appraising, pleading, courthouse procedures and legal specializations.

Many stringent paralegal/legal assistant college programs have accreditation through the American Bar Association. This accreditation can make prospective employees appear more attractive to employers. *Guidelines and Procedures for Obtaining ABA Approval of Legal Assistant Education Programs* defines the legal assistant/paralegal in the following manner:

The terms legal assistant and paralegal are used interchangeably, which means persons who, although not members of the legal profession, are qualified through education, training, or work experience, who are employed or retained by a lawyer, law office, governmental agency, or other entity in a capacity or function which involves the performance, under the direction and supervision of an attorney, of specifically delegated substantive legal work, which work, for the most part, requires a sufficient knowledge of legal concepts such that, absent that legal assistant, the attorney would perform the task. (ABA By-Laws §21.12.)

The *Career Information Center and the Occupational Outlook Handbook* both describe the legal assistant, who generally works under the supervision of an attorney or senior paralegal, as performing the following job-specific duties: research background material, write reports, help prepare financial statements and tax returns, prepare employee contracts, prepare labor and management negotiations, prepare stock option plans, prepare contracts and mortgages, prepare probate inventories, contact clients for information for lawyers, index and summarize documents and draft organization documents such as calendars and agendas for board meetings, help prepare legal arguments, draft pleadings to be filed with the court, obtain affidavits, and assist the attorneys during trials.

Often the legal assistant may be confused with the legal secretary, especially if the legal secretary performs some legal assisting functions. Overall, legal assisting is quite different from the legal secretary who primarily performs clerical functions, such as typing, filing and receiving clients. The *Classification of Instructional Programs* cites a Legal Administrative Assistant/Secretary program (52.0403) as:

An instructional program that prepares individuals to perform the duties of special assistants and/or personal secretaries for lawyers, judges, and legal counsels. Includes instruction in business and legal communications, principles of law, public relations, scheduling and

travel management, secretarial accounting, filing systems and records management, conference and meeting recording, report preparation, office equipment and procedures, office supervisory skills, legal terminology and research methods, and professional standards and legal requirements.

Legal assistants resist being classified as a legal secretary, as a different type of education and training is involved. The legal assistant should be required to perform more research and writing functions of an attorney, in order to take over such assignments in case of his/her absence. Although a legal assistant is not authorized or licensed to practice law, this occupation is distinctly unlike the clerical tasks of a secretary.

METHODOLOGY

Methods of Data Collection

Literature Search

In order to obtain background information about the legal assisting field, a literature search was conducted and professional, industry, public and regulatory bodies were contacted. A complete list is provided in the *Bibliography*.

Employer Survey

A telephone survey of 108 employers in Southeast Michigan was conducted in August, 1994. Although 41 (38%) of the employers employ legal assistants, 67 (62%) do not. Those employers who do not employ legal assistants were asked what their reasons were for not hiring legal assistants, and who does the LGL tasks. Respondents represented several different areas, including: government operated agencies (i.e. district courts, circuit courts, probate courts, defenders offices, prosecutors offices, legal aide and offices in Lansing, Michigan), corporate legal departments, legal departments in hospitals and private law firms (see Appendix D). Employers were asked a series of questions regarding hiring practices and potential employment opportunities (see Employer Survey, Appendix E).

Additionally, respondents provided detailed information regarding desired qualifications and specific skill levels for entry level employees. Potential respondents were selected from a variety of sources, and included those employers who presently employ OCC LGL graduates, Dun & Bradstreet's List, local telephone directories, the Michigan Bar Journal, as well as references from employers contacted. Companies representing a variety of sizes and interests were included in order to provide a comprehensive view of employer needs in the local area (see Appendices H and I for Employer Narratives).

Those employers who do not employ legal assistants were not asked any further questions, thus are not statistically part of the employer survey analysis of 41 respondents who do employ legal assistants.

Student Survey

Eighty-seven (87) students who had taken at least one Legal Assistant (LGL) course at OCC during the past academic year (Spring 1993 to Winter 1994) completed a telephone survey regarding their motivation for taking Legal Assistant courses, satisfaction with the program and expectations for using experience/knowledge obtained from their legal assisting course work (see Appendix F).

"Graduate Follow-Up" Survey

Data from the College's ongoing *Graduate Follow-Up Survey* was available for 142 students who received Associate Degrees and Certificates from the OCC Legal Assistant Program between 1988 and 1993. Both quantitative and qualitative analysis of this data was conducted. Comments obtained from these graduates appear in their entirety in Appendix G.

Comparative Analysis of Statewide Programs

A review of existing legal assistant/paralegal programs in higher education institutions in Michigan was conducted. An examination of ABA approved programs, as well as those not ABA approved, was conducted for comparisons in program enrollment, graduation, and program content.

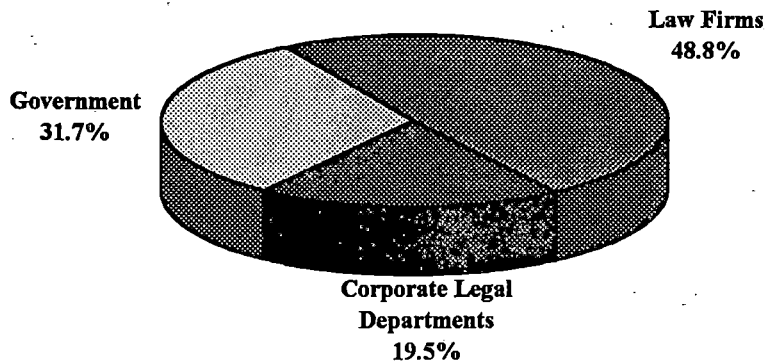
Methods of Data Analysis

Quantitative analysis of the employer and student survey data was conducted by means of frequency distributions, correlations, cross-tabs, and means analyses. Verbal responses were analyzed for content (Appendix H). Employers were grouped into three separate categories, and the analysis was completed using these categories (see Table 2 and Figure 2): government operated agencies, corporate legal departments (including hospitals) and private law firms. Analysis was completed on the employers who hire legal assistants (41).

Table 2

Type of Employers Surveyed		
<i>Employer Type</i>	<i>Number Responding</i>	<i>Percent of Total</i>
Law Firms	20	48.8
Corporate Legal Departments	8	19.5
Government	13	31.7
All Employers	41	100.0

Figure 2



Student survey data reflect their experiences, expectations, and opinions about the program. Quantitative data were statistically analyzed, while narrative responses were analyzed for content.

ANALYSIS

Legal Assisting Industry Outlook

The legal industry will always exist, and according to experts, is presently growing at an average pace. The need for legal assistants in the industry is growing at a much faster rate, as legal services become consumer-oriented, with customers wanting the most for their dollar. While attorneys can make more money by performing their own legal assistant tasks, thereby charging the customer a higher fee, most are finding that they will retain a larger customer base if they use their resources wisely.

The State Bar of Michigan, Legal Assistant Section, prepared a survey which was sent to every Michigan State Bar member (25,299) in June, 1994. Preliminary results mimic OCC's legal assistant survey findings, indicating that; approximately half of the respondents do not use legal assistants, government agencies are less likely to hire legal assistants, most respondents think that legal assistants are cost efficient, and weak writing skills tend to be an area of concern for employers. The response

rate was five percent, and final survey results will not be available until January, 1995. However, a copy of the survey appears in Appendix K.

Employment Opportunities

Data from the OCC Legal Assistant survey indicate that the majority of employers feel that future employment for legal assistants in their organization is good to excellent (see Table 3 and Figure 3). Furthermore, the best employment opportunities tend to be in private law firms. The primary reason is cost effectiveness; law firms are client oriented businesses, therefore by hiring legal assistants, attorneys reduce costs to their clients.

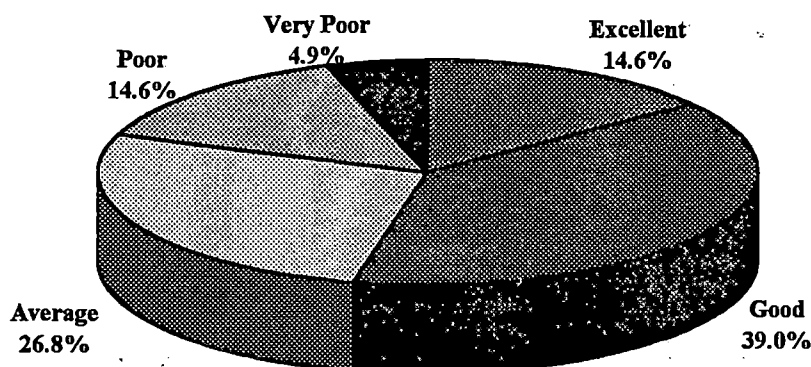
Survey findings also revealed some potential problems in the field; Reasons for not hiring legal assistants include financial constraints, not enough work to warrant a legal assistant, and the practice of hiring law school students. Law school students, commonly known as law clerks, are hired because there is no need to pay them benefits, they are knowledgeable about the field of law, and some employers believe they should be given the chance to be immersed in the field of their future profession. Commonly cited narratives appear below:

- | | |
|------------------|---|
| <i>Excellent</i> | Budgetary reasons - cheaper than law student and also the turn over is not as great. |
| <i>Good</i> | Pressure of client demand at lowest price. |
| <i>Average</i> | The trend has changed. Law firms are becoming overwhelmed with having law students as legal assistants. They can do the work of legal assistants, they are not paid benefits, get low salary. They work for experience for future employment. The economics of law practice have changed, much competition between firms, clients want the most they can get for the least amount of money. There is still a place for legal assistants, but not as great as in the 80's. |
| <i>Poor</i> | We are in the midst of employee cutbacks because of budgetary problems. |
| <i>Very Poor</i> | Too many legal assistants out there - not enough legal secretaries, secretaries can do a legal assistant's work, but not vice versa. |

Table 3
Future Employment Opportunities for Legal Assistants

<i>Employer Type</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Excellent</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Percent</i>		
				<i>Average</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>Very Poor</i>
Law Firms	20	20.0	40.0	30.0	0.0	10.0
Corporate Legal	8	0.0	50.0	25.0	25.0	0.0
Government	13	15.4	30.8	23.1	30.8	0.0
All Employers	41	14.6	39.0	26.8	14.6	4.9

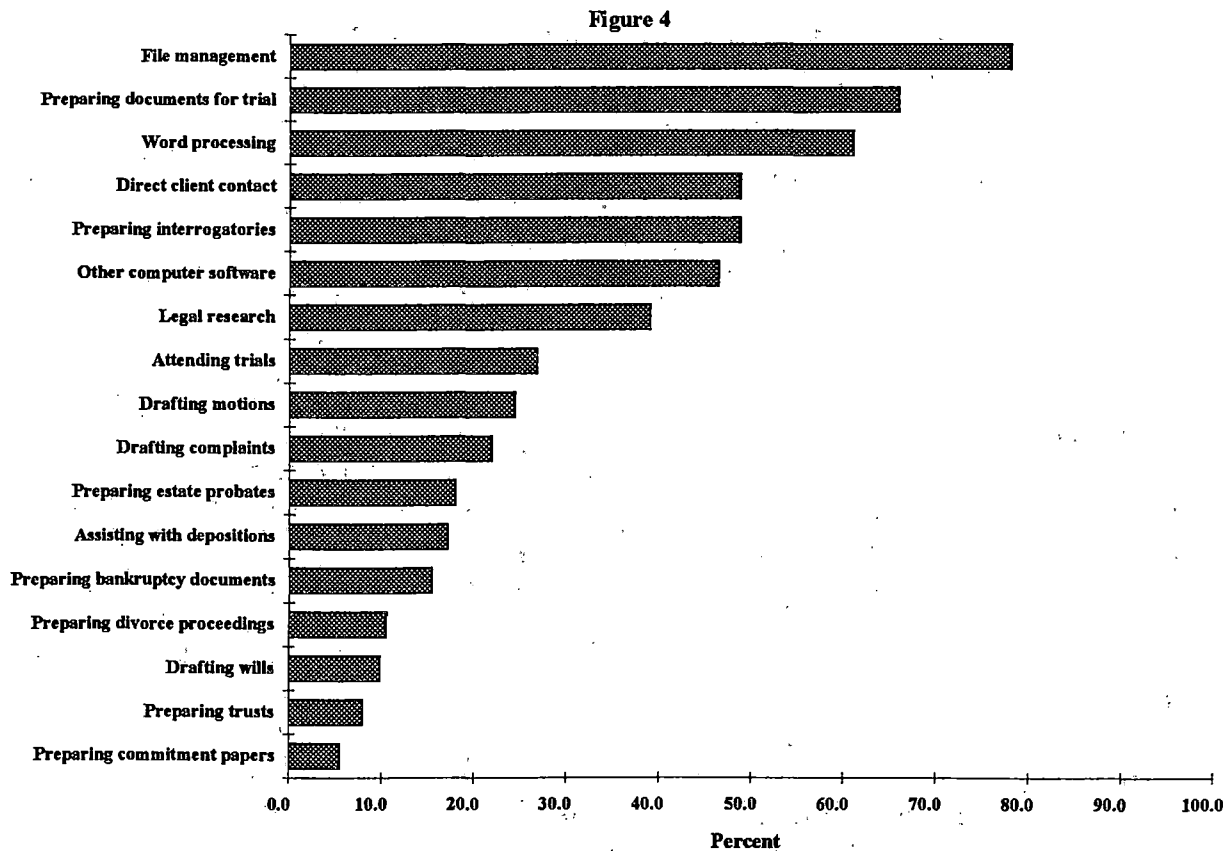
Figure 3
All Employers



The majority of students (89%) who recently enrolled in an LGL course are also "majoring" in the program. Of those majoring in LGL, nearly 56% are currently employed full-time, with an additional 18% employed part-time. Slightly over eight percent of these students are unemployed and currently seeking employment, while 17% are unemployed and not seeking employment.

Table 4
Technical/Academic Skills Viewed
as "Very Important" for Entry-Level Employees

<i>Skill</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>
File management	32	78.0
Preparing documents for trial	27	65.9
Word processing	25	61.0
Direct client contact	20	48.8
Preparing interrogatories	20	48.8
Other computer software	19	46.3
Legal research	16	39.0
Attending trials	11	26.8
Drafting motions	10	24.4
Drafting complaints	9	22.0
Preparing estate probates	7	17.9
Assisting with depositions	7	17.1
Preparing bankruptcy documents	6	15.4
Preparing divorce proceedings	4	10.5
Drafting wills	4	9.8
Preparing trusts	3	7.9
Preparing commitment papers	2	5.4



Employers were asked to rate the importance of various job-specific skills for their entry level employees. Table 4 and Figure 4 display percentages of all employers who rated individual skills as "very important." File management (78%), preparing documents for trial (66%), and word processing (61%) are skills employers rated as the most important. Preparing divorce proceedings (11%), drafting wills (10%), preparing trusts (8%), and preparing commitment papers (5%) are shown to be less important. This finding suggests that learning file management skills, how to prepare documents for trial, and word processing skills may increase the marketability of students in the industry. Other courses employers would like prospective employees to learn are included in the following narratives:

- Good writing, good research skills.
- Preparing legislation, to take care of issues and the legislative process.
- Have fundamental education background because every firm teaches individual methods of doing things.
- Reading, writing, analytical skills, can't emphasize those enough, culture of law and law firm, and law as a business
- Communication skills, investigation, and analytical skills.
- Verbal communication skills, a modified Dale Carnegie course that teaches you how to think on your feet.
- Emphasis on litigation, knowledge of data bases, document management, how to organize and define key documents.
- Good writing skills to prepare legal research and memorandums for opinions. The stronger the computer research skills are the better qualified one would be for employment.

Respondents participating in the employer survey also rated a list of personal qualities and academic skills with regard to perceived importance for entry level employees (see Table 5 and Figure 5). Respondents rated good speaking skills (63%) and working with people from diverse backgrounds (71%) as the least important skills for entry level legal assistants. Employers place the highest value on the employee's ability to work as a team member (98%), good listening skills (95%), and organizational skills (93%). A high value was also placed on the employee's ability to use individual initiative (85%), knowledge and use of legal ethics (85%), interpersonal skills (83%), writing skills (83%), and problem solving skills (81%). All skills were rated very important by at least 63% of the respondents. Typical comments include:

- Prioritizing, crisis management skills; should realize when something is over their head, should know their limitations and when to ask for help. Also need to work on punctuality.

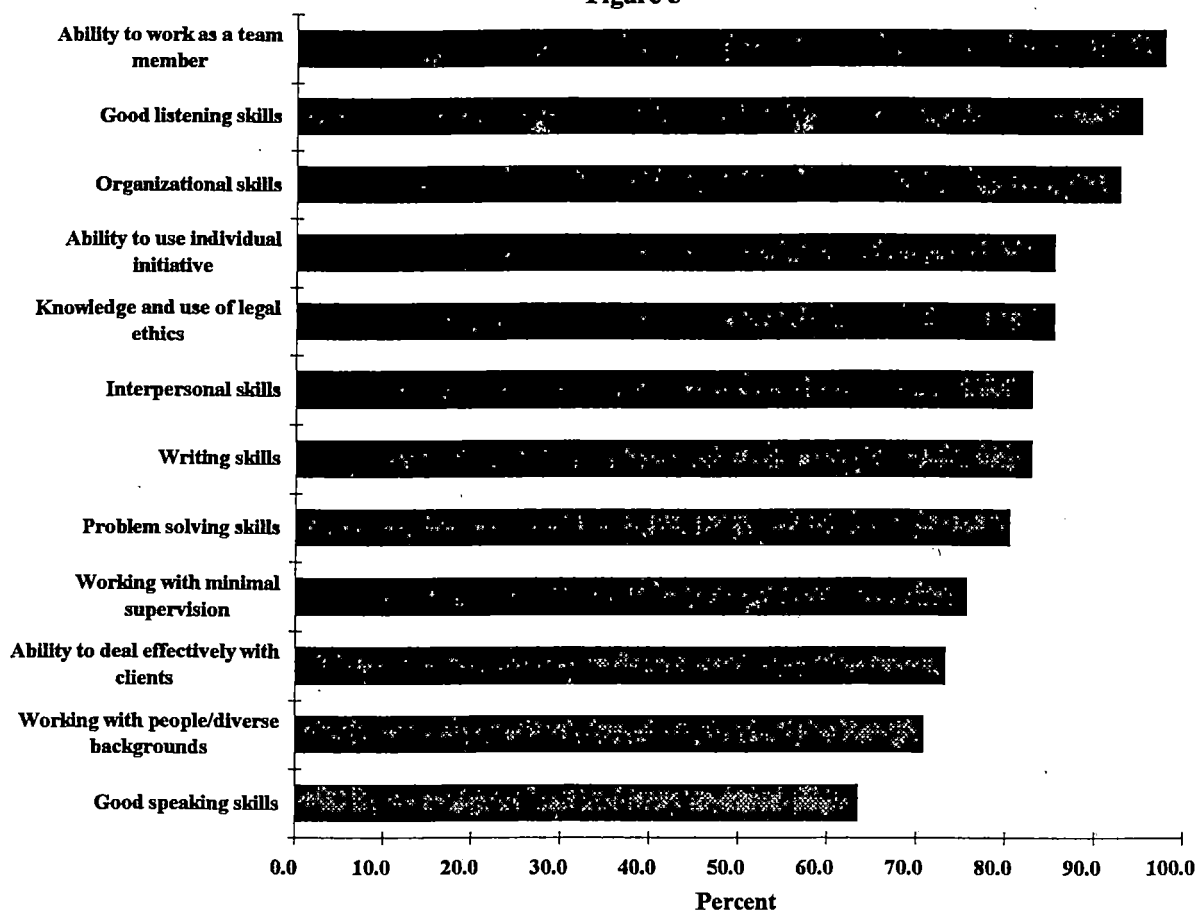
- Ability to handle interruptions, juggle a lot of different tasks at the same time.
- More reasonable expectation of the job itself.
- Efficiency, and ability to see something through to conclusion.
- Emphasis on organizational skills.

Table 5

Personal/General Education Characteristics Viewed
as "Very Important" for Entry-Level Employees

<i>Characteristic</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Ability to work as a team member	40	97.6
Good listening skills	39	95.1
Organizational skills	38	92.7
Ability to use individual initiative	35	85.4
Knowledge and use of legal ethics	35	85.4
Interpersonal skills	34	82.9
Writing skills	34	82.9
Problem solving skills	33	80.5
Working with minimal supervision	31	75.6
Ability to deal effectively with clients	30	73.2
Working with people/diverse backgrounds	29	70.7
Good speaking skills	26	63.4

Figure 5



Over one-third (38%) of respondents in the employer survey claim that they are interested in assisting OCC in the design and development of the LGL Program, with an additional 15% citing that they "may" like to assist in the LGL Program.

Employment Outlook

According to *Career Information Center (1993)*, the employment outlook for corporate legal assistants and paralegal aides is excellent through the year 2000. Corporate legal assistants may find work in insurance companies, estate and trust departments of large banks, and real estate companies. Paralegal aides may find positions in private law firms, consumer organizations, government agencies, and the court system. Private law firms are the largest employers of paralegal aides, according to *Career Information Center*.

MOIS information also reveals that law firms (legal services) employed the largest percentage of legal assistants in 1988. *MOIS* indicates that the employment outlook in Michigan for legal assistants is expected to increase much faster than the average for all occupations through the year

2000. Most of the growth in the industry will be due to increased use of paraprofessionals to reduce costs and increase the availability of legal services. As is indicated by *MOIS*, growth is to be expected in such areas as consumer protection, the environment, safety, and employment by private agencies employing legal assistants to represent the poor, the elderly, women, and members of minority and special interest groups. An increase in the use of computerized research methods and improvements in law office technologies may affect the outlook. Perhaps, as systems become more computerized, there may not be a need to hire as many individuals to staff an office, or the quality of education will shift to more computer-based programs.

A recent survey completed by *Correll•Porvin Associates, P.C. (August 1994)* states that, of the 56 firms surveyed in the Detroit area, 67% plan to maintain the same level of paralegals as in 1993, while 31% of the firms expect to increase their paralegal staff. Only two percent of the firms plan to reduce their paralegal staff.

Sixty-seven (62%) of the 108 employers contacted as part of this study indicated that they do not hire legal assistants. These findings, supported in the literature examined, indicate that the legal field is interested in legal assistants as employees, yet there are many budget restraints reported by the government sections. Common responses from employers include; judges and lawyers do their own research and law students are hired as clerks. Employers who do not employ legal assistants cited several other reasons for their decision (see Appendix I for a complete list of reasons). Commentaries appear below:

- Recent law school graduates prepare reports pending on appeal. They write appellate briefs which are too cumbersome for legal assistants to handle.
- Usually have college students in internships. Don't have paralegal classifications. Just have general secretaries or general clerks. No legal secretaries, either. Someone with an LGL degree wouldn't use that background in a court, it helps with terminology and basic procedures but that's it. Paralegals would have a better chance getting a job with a private law firm.
- We employ one legal law clerk to do the needed work. This person is a 2nd year law student who works as a court officer/research clerk. Paralegal work is done at a minimum of this level with on the job training.
- We have one person who's the Risk Manager, but she's a nurse. All other legal matters are sent to the Dept. of Mental Health in Lansing, which in turn contacts the Attorney General's office there. The Attorney General's office handles everything.
- No job classification for Legal Assistant/Paralegal. LGL duties are handled by a Registered Nurse - she is a part-time Patient Advocate and a part-time Risk Manager. The hospital contracts two different

outside law firms for legal affairs and the Patient Advocate/Risk Manager works in conjunction with these attorneys on legal matters.

- We only hire law clerks in their junior or senior year. We feel that it is important to give prospective lawyers a training ground to get started in the profession.

Employee Benefits

The *Occupational Outlook Handbook (May 1994)* notes that salaries vary greatly, depending on the education, training, and experience the paralegal brings to the job, the type and size of employer, and the geographic location of the job. Paralegals had an average annual salary of \$28,300 in 1993, according to a utilization and compensation survey by the National Association of Legal Assistants. Entry-level salaries averaged \$23,400 per year, while those with 11 to 15 years experience averaged an annual salary of \$29,800. In addition to a salary, many paralegals received an annual bonus, which averaged \$1,700 in 1993. Paralegal Specialists hired by the federal government in 1993 started at \$18,000 to \$23,000 per year, depending on their training and experience. The *Occupational Outlook Handbook (1994)* reports an average annual salary of paralegals who worked for the federal government in 1993 to be \$37,600 per year.

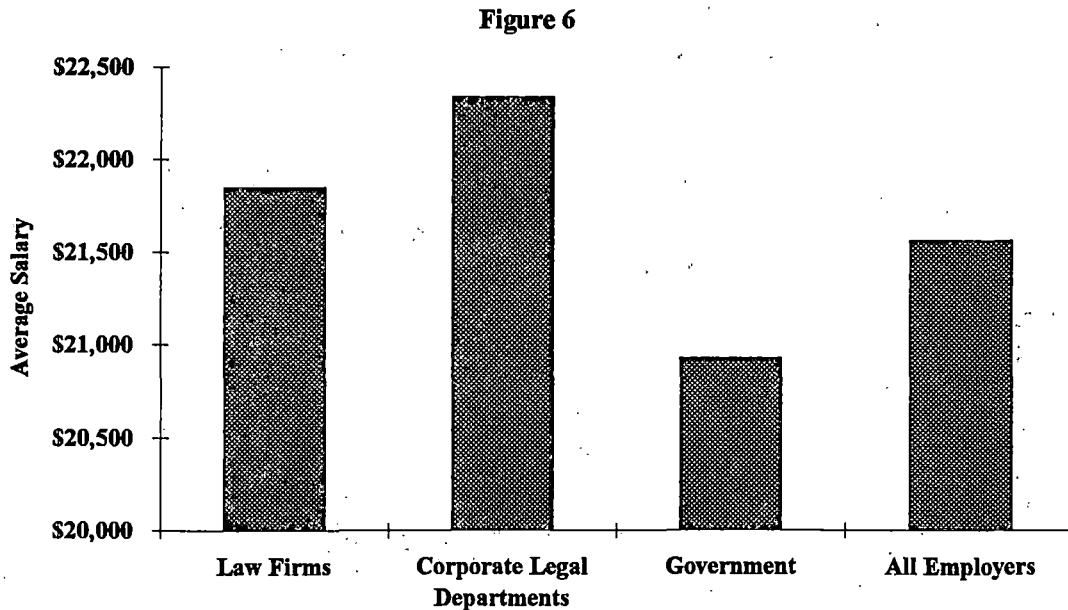
Career Information Center (1993) declares that entry level salaries range from \$16,000 to \$20,000 per year, leading up to \$21,400 to \$28,600 per year for experienced corporate legal assistants or paralegal aides. Benefits generally include paid holidays and vacations, health and life insurance, and pension plans.

MOIS indicates that salary levels in Michigan are much lower than the national average. In 1991, inexperienced legal assistants earned a median annual salary of \$16,000, while legal assistants with three to five years of experience averaged \$18,000 to \$20,000 per year. *MOIS* also states that salaries tend to be higher in corporate settings, although corporations often require four-year degrees. In 1992, *MOIS* findings show that the State of Michigan salary range for legal assistants employed in government agencies started at \$23,866 up to \$40,131 per year. In the city of Detroit, the salary range was slightly lower at \$22,370 to \$26,130 per year. Oakland County salaries ranged from \$20,513 to \$26,713, while Wayne County legal assistants earned from \$19,091 to \$20,999 per year.

Employer survey results indicate that average remuneration for full-time legal assistants is \$21,553 per year in all divisions (see Table 6 and Figure 6). Corporate legal departments are the highest paying employers, with entry level legal assistants receiving an average of \$22,333 per year, while law firms pay \$21,873, and government agencies pay the lowest average salary of \$20,918 per year.

Table 6
Average Entry Level Salary by Employer Type

<i>Employer Type</i>	<i>Average Salary</i>
Law Firms	\$21,843
Corporate Legal Departments	\$22,333
Government	\$20,918
All Employers	\$21,553



The employer survey revealed a small number of government agencies who employ part-time legal assistants, reimbursing them \$7.00 to \$8.00 per hour at 15 to 20 hours per week.

Advancement Opportunities

According to the *Career Information Center*, some legal assistants find that their skills form a good base for administrative positions of increased responsibility, while others use their specialized knowledge as the foundation for more advanced training at law school. *MOIS* also notes that individuals may find part-time work as a legal assistant or legal secretary in addition to educational programs in order to gain experience for entering the legal profession. Paralegals will also find increased opportunities by moving to larger law firms where they may take on greater tasks and/or supervisory responsibilities.

MOIS confirms findings in the employer survey that there is no clear-cut path of advancement for legal assistants. As legal assistants become experienced, their employers usually give them additional responsibilities along with an increase in wages.

Occupational specialties are possible in such areas as real estate, estate planning, probate court work, family law, labor law, litigation, and corporate law. Some legal assistants specialize even further in one particular area, such as employee benefits, rather than a broader specialty like labor law.

Respondents indicate that there are advancement opportunities for legal assistants. In addition to added responsibilities, and an increase in wages, a legal assistant may become a legal administrator, a position which encompasses more managerial functions. Related comments include:

- Become legal administrator, more firms are hiring for this job.
- Salary bonuses and increased responsibility at the firm - or the opportunity to move on to a better firm.
- Promotions to: different levels of legal assistants, their experience has allowed them to move to different departments within the organization.
- Legal assisting as defined is an end point. Firm has never had a legal assistant become a lawyer in the firm, although many have left to go to law school. Have no hierarchy of legal assistants.
- Some organizations have a paralegal hierarchy. For example, paralegal 1,2, and 3 depending on years of service. There's always the opportunity.
- Change in status, may advance to Senior Legal Assistant and assume more responsibilities.
- Not a lot. If one comes in where there is a staff of 20 legal assistants, can move to the top of that group. Without further training they top-off at that level.
- In large firms, Legal Assistant Manager.

Whatever the legal assistant may advance to, experience is the key, even if legal assisting is a stepping stone toward a career as an attorney.

Occupation

Level of Training Needed

A career in legal assisting requires a high school diploma and specialized training, in a two or four year college. The *Career Information Center* and the *Occupational Outlook Handbook* advise students to take courses in business law, legal procedures, legal terminology, personal management, finance, law office management, accounting, insurance, torts, legal research techniques, and courses covering specialized areas of the law.

According to *MOIS*, most legal assistants are required to have some technical training in the legal field at a post-secondary institution or in the military service. This does not discount those who have earned their way into the legal assistant field through experience alone.

As technology progresses, computerized training is becoming more important for entry level legal assistant positions. Presently, all institutions with an LGL program either offer or require at least one class in computer applications. OCC's LGL program has recently been awarded a Perkins Grant totalling \$45,000, in order to update their computer systems with CD-ROM assisted research. As a result, OCC will establish a dedicated legal assistant research lab within the next few months (winter 1995).

Findings from a recent report conducted by *Correll•Porvin Associates, P.C.: Law Firm Survey (August, 1994)*, suggest that two percent of the law firms surveyed use Macintosh, while 87% use IBM compatible computers. Eighty-four percent of the firms surveyed use WordPerfect and ten percent use Wang for their word processing. One-third of the respondents use a Windows environment.

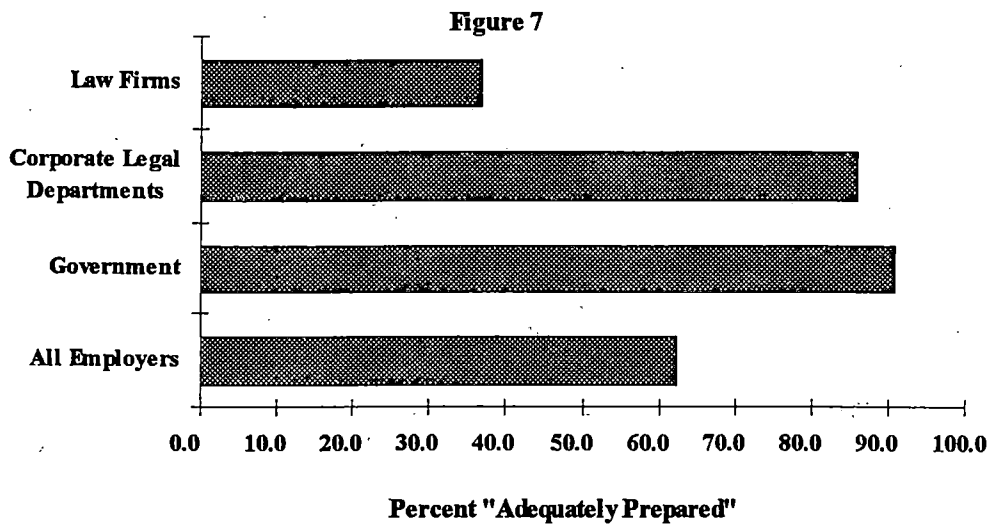
Adequacy of Currently Available Training

The *Occupational Outlook Handbook* claims that there were over 600 formal paralegal training programs offered nationwide by four-year colleges and universities, law schools, community and junior colleges, business schools, and proprietary schools in 1993. At that time, 177 programs had been approved by the American Bar Association. Although this approval is neither required nor sought by many programs, graduation from an ABA approved program can enhance one's employment opportunities, according to the *Occupational Outlook Handbook*.

Results of the employer survey indicate that respondents believe the level of preparation of entry level legal assistants is adequate overall (62%)(see Table 7 and Figure 7). Furthermore, nearly 22% indicated having problems finding well-qualified entry level legal assistants. Government (91%) and corporate legal departments (86%) find their entry-level legal assistants to be more *adequately prepared* for employment than law firms (37%). Over one-third (37%) of the law firms found their legal assistants to be *not prepared* at all for employment.

Table 7
Perceived Preparation Levels of Entry-Level Employees

<i>Employer Type</i>	<i>Adequately Prepared</i>	<i>Occasionally Prepared</i>	<i>Not Prepared</i>
Law Firms	36.8	26.3	36.8
Corporate Legal Departments	85.7	0.0	14.3
Government	90.9	9.1	0.0
All Employers	62.2	16.2	21.6



Those who reported difficulties in locating qualified personnel trained in legal assisting cited a variety of reasons, including poor writing skills and no specialty background education. Specific employer responses include:

Poor writing, immature, specialty background/knowledge lacking. For example, Environmental Law.

Assistants are not trained for specific type of work. Hard to find people who can fit into our group. Insurance Defense Firm.

Students, law firms, and the legal profession have different definitions of the legal assistant's role. In our firm, legal assistants do a lot of typing and a small amount of research and writing. Many students do not expect to do typing.

The last comment illustrates that legal assistants can have difficulty in trying to differentiate themselves from the position of a legal secretary.

Legal Assistant/Paralegal Programs in Michigan

There are several certificate and associate degree programs offering a legal assistant/paralegal program in Michigan. Ten of these schools in Michigan are ABA approved; the American Institute for Paralegal Studies, Eastern Michigan University, Ferris State University, Henry Ford Community College, Kellogg Community College, Lansing Community College, Macomb Community College, Madonna University, Oakland University, and University of Detroit Mercy. Following are descriptions of four ABA approved programs, and one college currently in the process of obtaining ABA approval.

Oakland University's twenty-year old Legal Assistant program has been ABA approved since 1976. This program can result in a certificate from the Department of Continuing Education, and also may be obtained concurrently with a bachelor's degree in Political Science. The majority of students already possess baccalaureate degrees (60%-70%), and consider this program a post-baccalaureate certificate. The legal assistant program requires the student to choose a specialization and take three specialized courses accordingly. Legal Assistant courses are either one or two credits, and include the following courses that OCC either does not offer, or includes in a more general course: Contracts, Substantive Law: Torts, Legal Research and Writing I and II, Real Property Transactions, Corporation, Probate Administration, Taxation of Estates and Trusts, Estate Planning and Documents, Special Topics for Legal Assistant. According to the program Director, Gloria Body, there were 250 students enrolled in the program in the Fall Semester 1994, and there were approximately 66 graduates in 1993.

Lansing Community College offers a Legal Assistant Associate Degree, as well as a Legal Assistant/Paralegal Post-Baccalaureate Certificate, which are accredited by the American Bar Association. The program includes a four-credit course in Legal Writing, a four-credit course in Legal Research and Writing II, and a four-credit course in Critical Thinking in Law. Other courses include Business Law I, II and III, Litigation Specialties, Real Estate Transactions, Probate, Domestic Relations, Administrative Law, Legal Interviewing and Investigation, Bankruptcy and Collections, three courses in Independent Study, each at one, two and three credits, and a Legal Assistant Internship. LCC maintains that the majority of their students find employment in private law firms. This program was initiated in the mid 1970's and has been ABA approved since 1988. There were 52 graduates in 1992, and there were approximately 200 full-time and 200 part-time students enrolled in 1993. However, enrollment has declined in the last year.

Kellogg Community College's Legal Assistant program leads to an associate in applied science and is approved by the American Bar Association. The program offers specialty laws such as two Criminal Law courses, Real Estate Law, Wills, Trust and Probate Law, two Business Law courses, two microcomputer software courses, and Accounting.

Ferris State University's Legal Assistant program leads to an associate in applied science degree, and is accredited by the American Bar Association. The program offers two Advanced Legal Writing courses, Civil Litigation, Criminal Litigation, Contracts and Sales Law Electives, Drafting Legal Instruments, Practice Studies. A Bachelor of Science Degree in Business Administration may be obtained concurrently with a two-year Legal Assistant degree.

Henry Ford Community College offers a Legal Assistant Associate degree. They are presently in the process of obtaining ABA approval. The head of the program, Lesley Sanders, indicates that the American Bar Association claims they have too many specialty courses, and not enough general education courses. Following is a list of their specialty courses: Court Systems and American Jurisprudence, Will, Trusts, Estate Planning, Family Law, Probate Administration, Property Law, Corporate and Tax Law, Commercial Law and Collection, Trial Practice and Appeals Civil and Criminal, Personal Injury Litigation, Employment Law, Writing in Law Practice, Legal Writing and Research, and Legal Assistant Internship.

Adequacy of OCC Legal Assistant Program

Students who had taken at least one OCC LGL course in the past twelve months were surveyed regarding their opinions and thoughts about the program. Several students indicated that Discovery of Evidence, Litigation, Legal Research I and II, and Substantive Law have been especially helpful to them in their current employment. Students also felt that Litigation, Legal Research II and Substantive Law were not at all helpful to them.

As OCC is presently attempting to secure accreditation by the American Bar Association, there has been a site visit to the campus (see Appendix L for the 'SITE VISIT REPORT'). One of the issues presented by the American Bar Association, (September 13, 1993), is that "a substantial amount of LGL courses presently exist in the program," yet there no specialized courses (see Appendix B). The student survey confirmed this need as nearly all respondents suggested the inclusion of specialty courses. Typical courses include:

family law	probate law
legal writing	immigration law
probate law	real estate law
legal terminology	bankruptcy law
criminal law	environmental law
patents, trademarks and copyright law	

More computer classes and planning a career as a legal assistant were also suggested as additions to the LGL program. It was also proposed that Preparation of Evidence be included as a mandatory prerequisite for Trial Preparation, or combined into one large course.

Students who responded to the *Graduate Follow-Up Survey* expressed their concern about the lack of ABA accreditation, the lack of specialty courses, and cited their worries about the level of instruction, both positively and negatively. Some students also claimed that the grading system was too lenient, and that teaching was inconsistent and not indicative of conventional situations. Promise of ABA approval by counsellors was apparently seen as an obstacle for future employment.

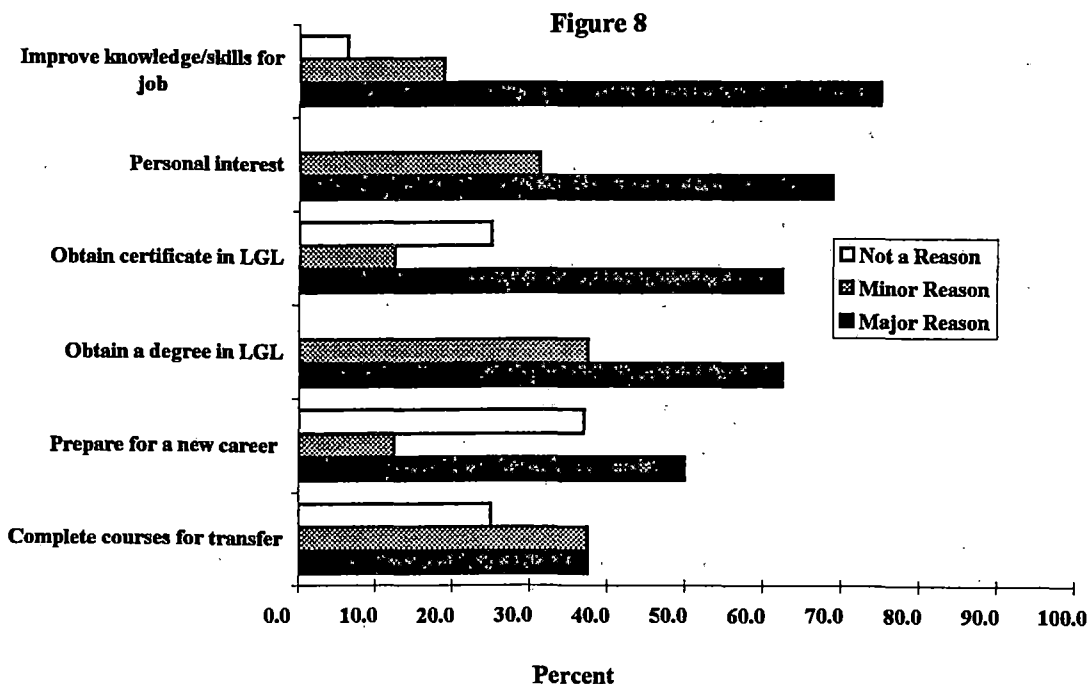
Employer survey respondents were asked if they have ever employed an individual who graduated from or who had taken courses in the OCC Legal Assistant program, and if they did, to what extent was that person prepared for employment in their organization. Seven respondents had, at one time, employed someone from OCC, and indicated only positive work-related comments. All

respondents claimed that their OCC employees were *adequately prepared* for employment within their firm.

When asked via the student survey whether the respondents' current job is *highly related*, *somewhat related* or *not at all related* to their course work, almost one-fifth (19%) responded that their job is *highly related*. Similarly, nearly 19% report that their current job is *somewhat related*, and 63% indicate that their job is *not at all related* to their LGL course work. Table 8 and Figure 8 depict students majoring in LGL who also indicated that their job is highly related to their course work, with their reasons for taking LGL courses (the numbers do not equal 100% because students were allowed to check all reasons that apply). It appears that improving knowledge and skills (75%) is the biggest reason for students majoring in LGL to enroll in the program. This may indicate that these students have already begun a career in the legal field. Half (50%) of the students indicated their major reason as preparing for a new career.

Table 8
 Reasons for Enrolling in LGL Courses at OCC
 LGL Major Students with Highly Related Jobs

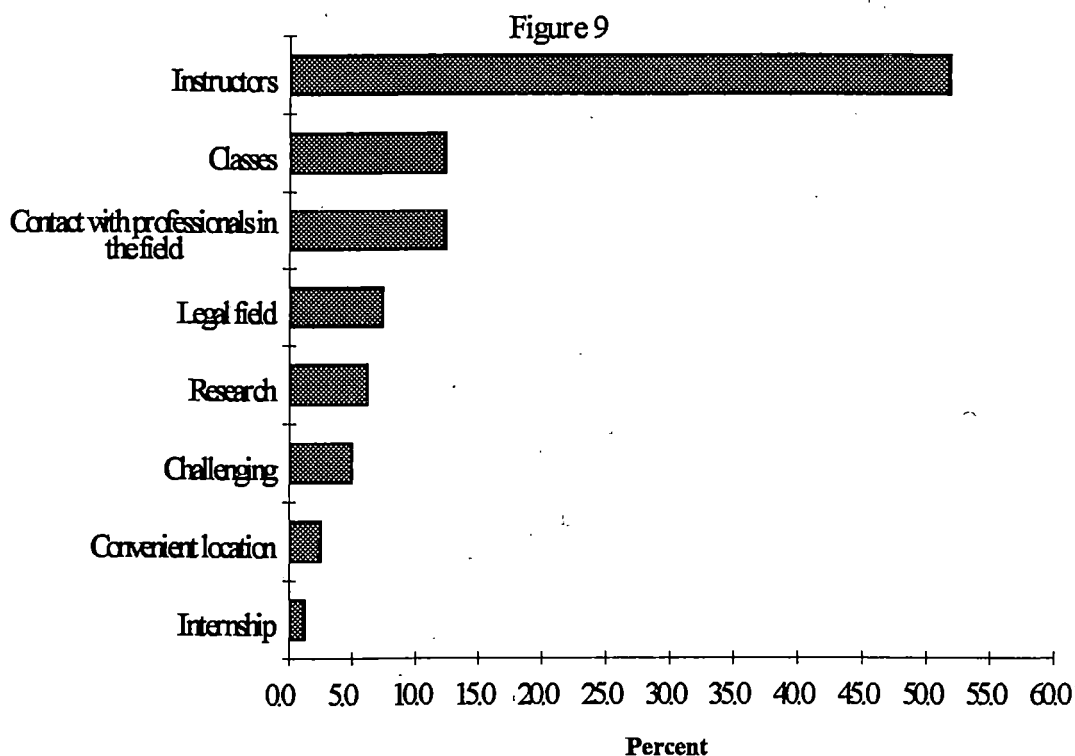
Student Responses	Percent		
	Major Reason	Minor Reason	Not a Reason
Improve knowledge/skills for job	75.0	18.8	6.3
Personal interest	68.8	31.3	0.0
Obtain certificate in LGL	62.5	12.5	25.0
Obtain a degree in LGL	62.5	37.5	0.0
Prepare for a new career	50.0	12.5	37.0
Complete courses for transfer	37.5	37.5	25.0



Students expressed positive feedback with regard to the instructors and their teaching methods (Table 9 and Figure 9). Specifically, students indicated that they are happy with the instructors (52%). Student narratives appear in their entirety in Appendix J.

Table 9
Elements Students Most Like about
the Legal Assistant Program

	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Instructors	42	51.9
Classes	10	12.3
Contact with professionals in the field	10	12.3
Legal field	6	7.4
Research	5	6.2
Challenging	4	4.9
Convenient location	2	2.5
Internship	1	1.2
Affordable	1	1.2
Total	81	100.0



Comments from students regarding various program elements suggest that they are happy with the encouragement and personal attention received from their instructors and are satisfied that the course work is relevant to their career path. When asked what they liked most about the program typical responses include:

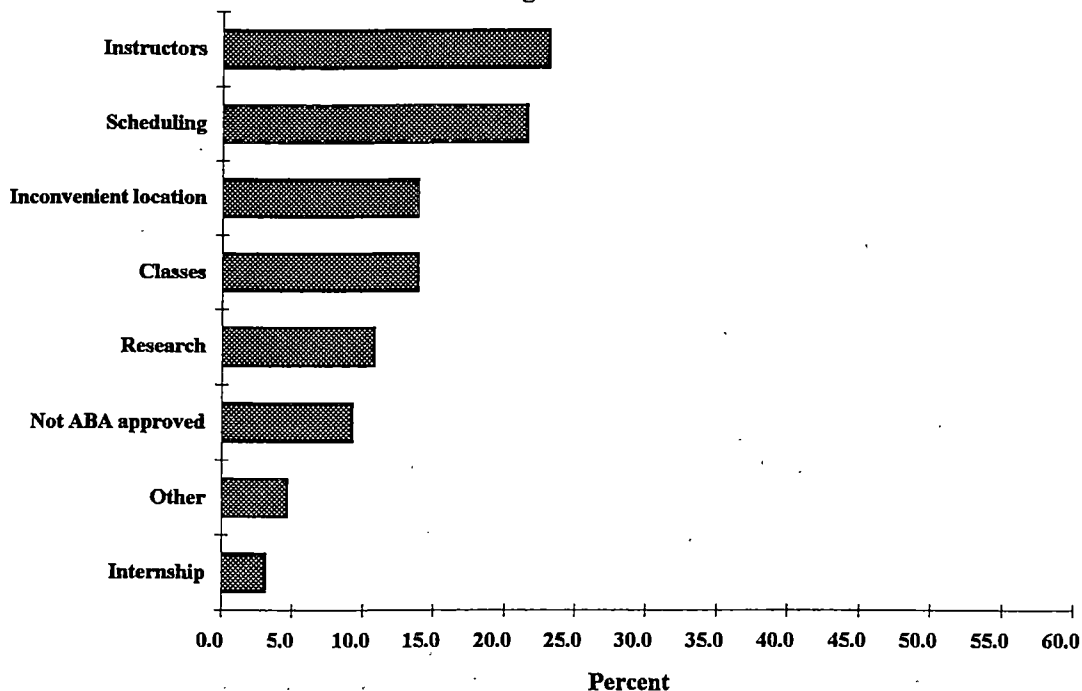
- The encouragement from the judges and lawyers who taught the classes. The value they placed on legal assistants.
- The instructors knew what they were talking about, and brought their real life experiences to class.
- Was challenging - a lot of work but enjoyed it. Going to the courthouse gave you a real feel for the legal profession.
- Having the attorneys as teachers, the practical knowledge they bring to class.
- I liked the fact that the professors are lawyers and judges and that the classes are small enough for them to get to know you.
- The professors, they were willing to answer all my specific questions. All were available for my individual help and needs.
- All the courses were interesting and they were all inter-twined with each other. I especially liked learning how to do research and how to prepare evidence.

When students were asked to indicate what they most dislike about the program, 65 (75%) of them indicated that they are most dissatisfied with the *instructors* (23%) and class *scheduling* (22%)(see Table 10 and Figure 10).

Table 10
Elements Students Most Dislike about
the Legal Assistant Program

	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Instructors	15	23.1
Scheduling	14	21.5
Inconvenient location	9	13.8
Classes	9	13.8
Research	7	10.8
Not ABA approved	6	9.2
Other	3	4.6
Internship	2	3.1
Total	65	100.0

Figure 10



Narrative comments underscore student concerns regarding class scheduling and the quality of instruction:

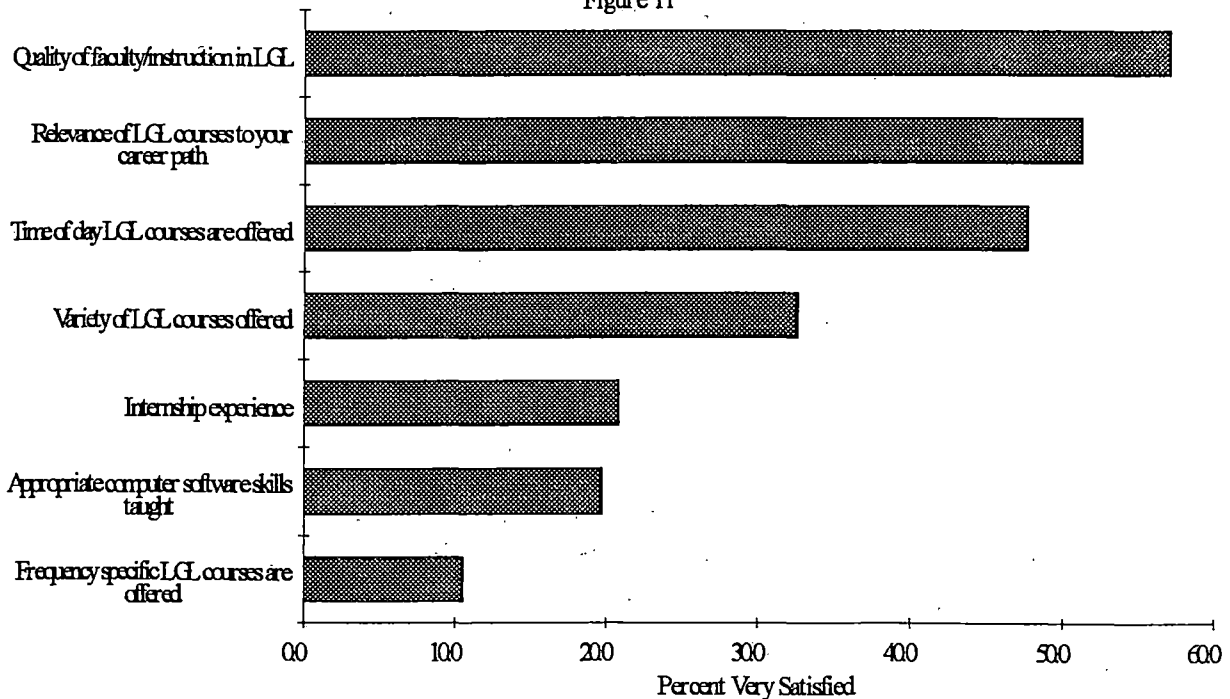
- Should not need to wait a year to take a class that may have been missed. Some day classes need to be offered. More than two classes per semester should be offered.
- Current schedule forces you to go year round. Should be offered more frequently to allow for time off.
- Discovery, Trial Preparation and Evidence should be offered more frequently.
- At least offer the same classes twice in a year. The hardest subject, Trial Preparation, was only offered in summer and that is a seven week course. Too much to handle in summer.
- Students need to be reminded to stay on track because the courses are not offered frequently enough - offer the courses more than once a year.
- The program goes in a year cycle. It would be nice if you could start in the fall or the spring. They should offer two starting cycles.

Although students claim to be dissatisfied with the quality of faculty/instruction in LGL, almost 91% of the students are satisfied with the quality of faculty/instruction in the program. The greatest concern of students appears to be the frequency of class offerings (Table 11 and Figure 11). Over one half (58%) of the students are dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the frequency of class offerings. Students want classes offered more than once per year, rather than offering several sections of the same course per semester. According to the student survey, the scheduling has postponed some students' graduation.

Table 11
Student Satisfaction with the Legal Assistant Program

	Number	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
Quality of faculty/instruction in LGL	86	57.0	33.7	7.0	2.3	0.0
Relevance of LGL courses to your career path	84	51.2	35.7	4.8	6.0	2.4
Time of day LGL courses are offered	86	47.7	23.3	11.6	9.3	8.1
Variety of LGL courses offered	86	32.6	46.5	16.3	3.5	1.2
Internship experience	24	20.8	8.3	25.0	25.0	20.8
Appropriate computer software skills taught	66	19.7	30.3	27.3	9.1	13.6
Frequency specific LGL courses are offered	86	10.5	20.9	10.5	33.7	24.4

Figure 11

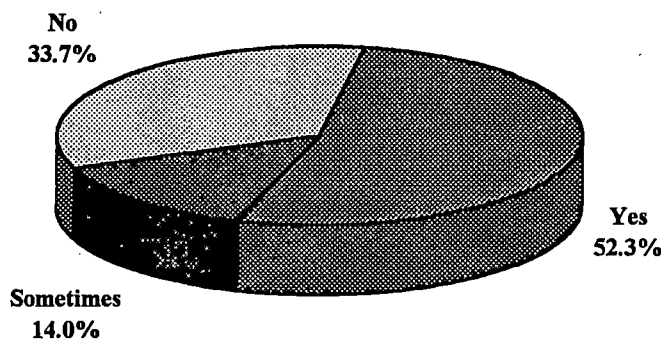


When asked if the present scheduling of LGL courses meets their needs and/or expectations, over one-third of the students indicated that class scheduling does *not* meet their needs. An additional 14% of the students feel that *sometimes* the scheduling meets their needs, while over half (52%) declared that the scheduling does meet their needs and/or expectations (see Table 12 and Figure 12).

Table 12
Scheduling LGL Courses to Meet the Needs of Students
by Credit Hours Completed and Overall

<i>Number of Credit Hours Completed</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>No</i>
1 - 3	27	44.4	11.1	44.4
4 - 6	15	26.7	20.0	53.3
7 or more	43	65.1	14.0	20.9
Overall	85	52.3	14.0	33.7

Figure 12
Students Rate the Scheduling According to Their Needs



CONCLUSION

Summary

This report has addressed several issues identified in the American Bar Association Accreditation Team. Specifically, they include; specialized courses being implemented, the appointment of a Program Director (Program Coordinator), an ongoing evaluation of the program, minority recruitment of both faculty and students, and clarification of criteria in the OCC catalogue. For detailed information, the ABA final report, "SITE VISIT REPORT," can be found in its entirety in Appendix L.

Students indicated, on both the LGL student survey and the *Graduate Follow-Up Survey*, that they are dissatisfied by the fact that OCC's program has not yet been ABA accredited. Lack of specializations offered in the program also seems to be a major concern for students. Scheduling has been recognized through the student survey as another area of discontentment for these students, and a large number of students mentioned dissatisfaction with their internship experience.

Employers rate file management as the most important technical skill for legal assistants to possess. The ability to work as a team member, good listening skills, and good organizational skills are ranked as the most important personal skills for entry level employees in the industry.

While future employment in the industry is apparently better than average, the fear of law school students taking over LGL tasks is evident. Prospective applicants are also wary about being classified as, or securing jobs as, legal secretaries rather than the more elevated position of legal assistant. According to the employer survey, career advancement for legal assistants can be added responsibilities with an increase in wages, or transition to a larger firm.

Issues

- The OCC catalogue states that the LGL program prepares students for "litigation in the various court systems at the local, state, and national levels." Although the student will be instructed in court procedures in both private and government settings, findings suggest that there are less employment opportunities in the court systems. The most optimistic area for employment is in private law firms.
- Students and employers are requesting specialized courses, which are not presently offered in the LGL program in any depth. Courses are presently being devised to correct the situation by including two specialized legal assistant courses suited to each student, or group of students. After this course proposition is approved by the College Curriculum Committee, these new courses are expected to be effective by September, 1995.
- Legal writing appears to be important to the students, and to many employers. All other colleges examined offer at least one, and often two, legal writing courses. These programs are ABA approved. Currently OCC offers two research and legal writing courses (Legal Research I and Legal Research II). The proposed revised catalogue description of Legal Research II gives a clearer understanding of the topic, hopefully satisfying both the students and their employers.
- Data strongly indicate that students in the program are satisfied with the instructors (52%), yet when asked what they dislike most, students also claim that they are the most dissatisfied with the instructors (23%). Every student responding to the survey indicated at least one "dislike" about the LGL program, while at the same time disclosing that they have many "likes" about the program.

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APPENDIX A

Legal Assistant Program Outline

28

A handwritten signature in black ink is written over a yellow highlight. The signature appears to be a stylized 'A' or 'S' with a horizontal line through it. The number '28' is written in the bottom left corner of the signature area.

Legal Assistant (LGL)

Orchard Ridge

Associate in Applied Science

This program, leading to either a certificate or an associate degree, is designed to provide the legal profession with qualified paraprofessionals who will perform legal research, aid in discovery, and analyze evidence in preparation for litigation in the various court systems at the local, state, and national levels. Prerequisites to the program include successful completion of ENG 151 and ENG 152.

Major Requirements

		Credits
LGL 200*	Legal Research I	3
LGL 201*	Discovery	2
LGL 202*	Litigation	4
LGL 203*	Legal Research II	3
LGL 204*	Substantive Law	4
LGL 205*	Preparation of Evidence	2
LGL 206*	Trial Preparation	3

Required Supportive Courses

BIS 107	Introduction to Word Processing	3
OR		
CIS 105*	Personal Computer Applications	4
BUS 203*	Business Law I	3
BUS 204*	Business Law II	3
ENG 151**	Composition I	3
ENG 152**	Composition II	3
SPE 129**	Interpersonal Communication	3
OR		
SPE 161**	Fundamentals of Speech	3

Recommended Elective

BIS 109	Introduction to Legal Office Environment	2
---------	--	---

General Education Requirements

See graduation requirements for an Associate in Applied Science Degree on Pages 43, 45 and 46.

Necessary Electives to Total..... 62 Credits

* General Education courses listed as Required Supportive may be used to meet requirements of the General Education component.

**When all the courses marked with an asterisk are completed, the students may apply for a certificate.

APPENDIX B

*Letter from American Bar Association
September 13, 1993*



AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION

Standing Committee on Legal Assistants

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ABA/Fax: (312) 988-5677

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September 13, 1993

Mr. J. Michael Kinney, Director
Legal Assistant Program
Oakland Community College
Orchard Ridge Campus
27055 Orchard Lake Road
Farmington Hills, MI 48334

Dear Mr. Kinney:

We are pleased to inform you that the preliminary review has been completed of the self-evaluation report of the Legal Assistant Program at Oakland Community College, which was submitted in application for American Bar Association approval. The purpose of the preliminary review is to determine that eligibility requirements have been met, that essential program components exist, that questions that can be answered and problems that can be resolved prior to an on-site visit are identified and cleared up, that the self-evaluation report is substantially complete and in proper form, and in general, that the program appears to be operating in compliance with the ABA Guidelines.

Your self-evaluation report presents a fairly comprehensive picture of the program, however a few revisions and clarifications are required before it can be reviewed by site visitation team members.

Guideline G-201, Evaluative Criteria B requires the program to define explicit objectives for its program of study stated in terms of the educational results to be achieved. The objectives stated in your report are satisfactory, however, the limitations of the program, including the legal restrictions on the practice of law by legal assistants should be listed in all published statements of the school's aims and objectives and in program descriptions or catalogs, bulletins, brochures, etc. (See Guideline G-501, Evaluative Criteria A.)

While the Guidelines do not specify how often the advisory committee should meet, a common practice among programs is for the advisory committee to meet at least

Mr. J. Michael Kinney
September 13, 1993
page 2

twice a year. The Guidelines make it clear that the committee is to be an active component of the program by developing admissions standards, recommending competent instructors, advising on current developments in relevant fields of law, assessing the job market and assisting in placement of graduates, promoting the program, evaluating its progress, and performing a variety of other tasks. Please expand and update Exhibit 12 by including the minutes of any other meetings that may have been convened during the past two years. Also, minutes of future meetings should be much more detailed.

The Guidelines and Procedures for Obtaining ABA Approval of Legal Assistant Education Programs, as Amended 1992 requires that an institution have an affirmative action program for recruitment of faculty members and the recruitment and placement of students. Please see the enclosed copy of the Guideline page which outlines the questions to be answered.

To comply with the provisions of Guideline G-303(b) programs using semester hours need at least eighteen semester hours of general education. A general education course is defined as "a course which is designed to give a student a broadly based education. Such courses would traditionally be in areas such as language and composition, mathematics, social and behavioral sciences, natural sciences, and the arts and humanities." Although your program allows for the required amount of general education, care must be taken to ensure that students are completing at least eighteen hours of acceptable courses. For this reason, a list of courses should be prepared for Legal Assistant students. The following courses should not be included on this list: Basic Drawing, Basic Design, Acrylic Painting, Ceramics, Sculpture, Oil Painting, Arts and Crafts, Watercolor Painting, Jewelry, Figurative Sculpture, Stained Glass, Piano, Guitar, Jazz Dance, Fundamentals of Photography, Fundamentals of Acting, and any Physical Education course.

Your program includes the required amount of legal specialty credits, however all courses are of a generalist nature. Has any thought been given to expanding your curriculum to provide students with choices in specific areas of law such as Real Estate, Probate, Bankruptcy, Domestic Relations, Criminal Law, Estates and Trusts, Environmental Law, etc.?

Mr. J. Michael Kinney
September 13, 1993
page 3

Section III: Educational Programs, Item C(2) is directed at eliciting feedback from employers of graduates. No employer feedback is presented in your report or by your exhibits. The site visit team will be particularly interested in determining whether the students are performing at the requisite level of competence in their permanent employment. I suggest that you develop a questionnaire to send to employers of your graduates. You should then submit this instrument with the other revisions to your report.

We would be interested in your transfer policy with regard to legal assistant courses. What standards do you apply when evaluating courses from another program? Many schools find it easiest to accept transfer credits only from other ABA approved programs. Others refuse to accept any paralegal courses taken at another institution, and still others allow credit for the transferred courses but also require the transfer student to complete a reasonable number of paralegal courses in their own program.

Guideline G-502(a) and its black-print subsection C make it clear that a program must have a working, well-organized plan for placement of its graduates. Please supply us with more detailed information on what you are doing to assist your program graduates in finding suitable employment. Exhibit 24 provides very little in the way of graduate placement information.

Guideline G-601A3(a-i) sets forth the minimum requirements for an internal library. Your list of library materials does not appear to include a sufficient number of texts of the role of the legal assistant.

Section V: Admissions and Student Services, Items A and F(1) refer to publicity or recruiting materials, descriptive literature, etc. Your report states that a program brochure is being developed. Is this brochure now available?

Finally, in answer to your request that final approval be made retroactive for prior graduates of the Legal Assistant Program, ABA policy does not allow for the granting of retroactive approval. Additionally, advertisements which allude to impending ABA approval are premature and no mention of ABA approval shall be

Mr. J. Michael Kinney
September 13, 1993
page 4

made prior to the official determination by the House of Delegates.

We trust that the foregoing will be of assistance to you as you revise the report. Please resubmit three complete revised reports, including the exhibits binder, and one copy of the revised pages for insertion in our file copy. Your prompt attention to getting the report back to us will expedite the processing of your application for approval and ensure a timely site visit to the College.

Thank you for your interest in obtaining ABA approval for your Legal Assistant Program and we look forward to seeing that accomplished. If I can be of assistance to you please do not hesitate to let me know.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Merrilou Rauch".

Merrilou Rauch
Staff Assistant

Enclosure

APPENDIX C

1994 Student and Financial Data Book

Table 3.6
Trend in Annual Student Credit Hours by Course Prefix Code*
(Academic Years 1984-85 Through 1993-94)

Course Code	Course Prefix Description	1984-85	1986-87	1987-88	1988-89	1989-90	1990-91	1991-92	1992-93	1993-94	Percent Change	
		SCH	** SCH	SCH	SCH	SCH	SCH	SCH	SCH	SCH	SCH	5- Year
BUSINESS												
ACC	Accounting	22,305.0	22,077.0	22,648.0	22,767.0	22,869.0	22,884.0	22,526.0	20,135.0	17,128.0	-25.1	-23.2
BIS	Bus Info Sys / OIS / SEC	16,624.0	11,128.0	9,679.0	9,204.0	9,042.0	8,952.0	6,942.0	7,404.0	6,074.0	-32.8	-63.5
BUS	Business Administration	24,288.0	25,098.0	26,463.0	25,065.0	24,531.0	24,660.0	23,545.0	21,186.0	19,452.0	-20.7	-19.9
CIS	Computer Info Sys / DPR	28,438.0	24,782.0	23,386.0	22,200.0	21,965.0	21,974.0	28,336.0	28,804.0	28,230.0	28.5	-0.7
LGL	Legal Assisting	0.0	205.0	633.0	919.0	873.0	1,595.0	1,585.0	1,549.0	1,619.0	85.5	—
MKT	Marketing	3,213.0	3,441.0	3,633.0	3,378.0	3,747.0	3,276.0	3,054.0	2,346.0	2,034.0	-45.7	-36.7
RES	Real Estate	272.0	381.0	204.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	—	-100.0
RET	Retailing	960.0	849.0	684.0	459.0	642.0	495.0	399.0	384.0	657.0	2.3	-31.6
Subtotal - Business		96,100.0	** 87,961.0	87,330.0	83,992.0	83,669.0	83,836.0	86,387.0	81,808.0	75,194.0	-10.1	-21.8

* Students represent duplicated headcount.

** Data for 1985-86 not available.

Table 3.7
Trends in Annual Duplicated Student Headcount by Course Prefix Code
(Academic Year 1984-85 Through 1993-94)

Course Code	Course Prefix Description	1984-85	1986-87	1987-88	1988-89	1989-90	1990-91	1991-92	1992-93	1993-94	Percent Change		
		Students	** Students	Students	Students	Students	Students	Students	Students	Students	Students	5- Year	10- Year
BUSINESS													
ACC	Accounting	5,914		5,791	5,935	5,985	5,999	6,001	5,901	5,327	4,527	-24.5	-23.5
BIS	Bus Info Sys / OIS / SEC	4,840		4,086	4,959	4,943	5,121	5,340	3,209	3,487	2,707	-47.1	-44.1
BUS	Business Administration	8,096		8,366	8,821	8,355	8,177	8,220	8,105	7,062	6,484	-20.7	-19.9
CIS	Computer Info Sys / DPR	7,251		6,306	5,981	5,677	5,642	5,607	8,162	8,490	8,381	48.5	15.6
LGL	Legal Assisting	0		67	211	308	289	534	506	500	523	81.0	—
MKT	Marketing	1,071		1,147	1,211	1,126	1,249	1,092	1,018	782	678	-45.7	-36.7
RES	Real Estate	76		107	51	0	0	0	0	0	0	—	-100.0
RET	Retailing	320		283	228	153	214	165	133	128	219	2.3	-31.6
Subtotal - Business		27,568	**	26,153	27,397	26,547	26,691	26,959	27,034	25,776	23,519	-11.9	-14.7

** Data for 1985-86 not available.

APPENDIX D

Employer List

Legal Assistant Employer List

- ♥ *Willing to help in the development of the LGL program*
- ☺ *Willing to offer a paid internship*
- ☺ *Willing to offer an unpaid internship*

Government

☺ Ann Arbor, City Attorney's Office
Ann Arbor, MI 48104
Mary Ann Thibodeau
Collection Attorney Supervisor:
Intern Program
313-994-2670

♥☺☺ Bloomfield Hills, City of
District Court 48
Bloomfield Hills, MI 48302-
3200
Jim Harkins
Court Administrator
810-647-1141

Board of Water & Light
Staff Attorney's Office
Lansing, MI 48901-3007
Mary Dwyer
Legal Assistant Supervisor
517-371-6166

Dearborn, City of
Legal Department
Dearborn, MI 48126
Nancy Marosi
Administrative Secretary
313-943-2053

♥☺ Detroit
District Court 36
421 Madison
Detroit, MI 48226
John Paul
Court Administrator
313 965-2568

♥ Highland Park, City
Attorney's Office
28 Gerald Ave.
Highland Park, MI 48203
Lolanada Johnson
City Attorney
313-252-0024

Macomb County
16th Circuit Court
Mt. Clemens, MI 48043
Kathryn Dodge
Executive Director
Senior Citizens Services
Department
810-469-6313

♥☺ Oakland County
6th Circuit Court
1200 N. Telegraph Rd.
Pontiac, MI 48341-0404
Margaret Garvin
Deputy Court Administrator
810-858-0347

♥☺ Oakland County Legal Aid
Pontiac, MI 48342
Paula Zimmer
Executive Director
810-456-8888

Plymouth
District Court 35
660 Plymouth Road
Plymouth, MI 48170
Marion Belding
Court Administrator
313-459-4740

Royal Oak
District Court 44
Royal Oak, MI 48068
Kevin J. Sutherland
Court Administrator
810-546-6347

☺ Warren, City of
City Attorney's Office
Warren, MI 48093
Sue Woodhouse
Legal Assistant Supervisor
810-574-4975

☺ Wayne County Neighborhood
Legal Services
Non-Profit Legal Services (non-
government)
3550 Cadillac Tower
Detroit, MI 48226
Jeannie McGuire
Supervising Attorney
313-962-0466

Hospitals

Beaumont Hospital
Royal Oak, MI 48073
Betsy Harper
Legal Assistant
810-551-0714

Detroit-Macomb Hospital Corp.
Warren, MI 48093
Laura Artemenko
Corporate Director, Risk Mgmt.
810-573-5916

Harper Hospital
Troy, MI 48084
Debbie Kordas
Claims Researcher
Risk Management
810-966-5000

☺ Macomb Hospital Center
Warren, MI 48093
Terry Quin
Assistant Risk Manager
810-573-5000

Mount Clemens General Hospital
Mount Clemens, MI 48043
Colleen O'Reilly
Risk Management Officer
810-792-4160

Oakwood Health Services
Hospital Corporation
Wayne, MI 48184
Mary Hamilton
Paralegal
Risk Mgmt & Legal Affairs
313-467-4577

Corporate Legal Depts.

Comerica Bank
Corporate Legal Department
Detroit, MI
Bernadette Moug
Legal Assistant/Employee Law
313-222-9586

♥ Kmart Corporation
Legal Department
Troy, MI 48084-3163
Susan Senopole
Supervisor of Paralegals
810-643-2727

Law Firms

♥ Barris Scott Denn & Driker
211 W Fort St 15 Flr
Detroit, MI 48226
Pam Czajokowski
Legal Assistant Supervisor
313-965-9725

Bassey and Selesko PC
27777 Franklin Rd
Southfield, MI 48034
John Selesko
Attorney
810-355-5000

♥ ☺ Bleakley & Mc Keen PC
1 Kennedy Square Ste-1800
Detroit, MI 48226
Mandy Bush
Legal Administrator
313-961-4400

♥ ☺ Bodman, Longley &
Dahling
110 Miller Ave #300
Ann Arbor, MI 48104
Tom Chuinavare
Supervisor of Legal Assistants
313-761-3780

♥ Butzel Long
150 W. Jefferson #900
Detroit, MI 48226
Diane Kowaleski
Legal Assistant Coordinator
313-225-7000

Collins, Einhorn & Farrell, PC
Inc.
4000 Town Ctr Ste 909
Southfield, MI 48075
Lori Driggs, Administrator
810-355-4141

Dickinson, Wright, Moon, Van
Dusen & Freeman
500 Woodward Ave Ste 4000
Detroit, MI 48226
Lynn Hess
Legal Assistant Coordinator
313-223-3612

♥ Dykema Gossett
400 Renaissance Ctr
Detroit, MI 48243
Katherine Humphrey
Partner, Director Legal
Specialists Program
313-568-6848

♥ ☺ Garratt & Evans, PC
300 E Long Lake Rd
Bloomfield Hills, MI 48304
Elizabeth Bechtold
Office Manager/Legal Assistant
810-645-1450

Honigman, Miller, Schwartz &
Cohn
660 Woodward Ave Ste 2290
Detroit, MI 48226
Pam Halborson
Litigation Support Coordinator
313-256-7800

Joslyn, Keydel, Wallace &
Carney
2211 Comerica Building
Detroit, MI 48226
Robert Joslyn
Partner
313-964-4181

♥ Kohl-Secret
(employed by the City of
Farmington Attorney's Office)
Farmington Hills, MI 48334
John Mitchell
Attorney
810-851-9500

Krass & Young PC
3001 W Big Beaver Rd
Troy, MI 48084
Sandra Curran
Office Administrator
810-649-3333

Stone & Biber PC
2701 Troy Center Dr 400
Troy, MI 48084
Lynn Batcheler
Office Manager
810-362-2030

♥ Miller, Canfield, Paddock &
Stone
150 W. Jefferson #2500
Detroit, MI 48226
Bill Parsons
Director of Administration &
Human Resources
313-963-6420

Stringari, Fritz, Kreger, Ahearn,
Bennett & Hunsinger, PC (Inc)
650 First National Building
Detroit, MI 48226
Dallas Moon
Associate
313-961-6474

♥ Paskin Nagi & Baxter PC
155 W Congress St Ste 600
Detroit, MI 48226
Debbie Greenan
Legal Assistant
313-964-2040

♥ Patterson Potter Delisi &
Carn
2701 University Dr
Auburn Hills, MI 48326
Irena Jurik
Office Manager
810-377-1700

♥ Plunkett & Cooney PC
243 W Congress St Ste 900
Detroit, MI 48226
Donna Kerry
Human Resources Manager
313-965-4725

Steinberg, Lee B PC
3000 Town Ctr Ste 2510
Southfield, MI 48075
Jamie Hannan
Office Administrator
810-356-6250

APPENDIX E

Employer Survey

Legal Assistant Program

Employer Survey

1. Does your organization employ Legal Assistant/Paralegal staff?

1 Yes

0 No, What are your organization's reasons for not employing Legal Assistant/Paralegal staff?
Probe for as much detail as possible (i.e. why don't they hire LGLs, who performs the LGL tasks, etc.), then discontinue survey.

2. Please describe the specific job duties/responsibilities that Legal Assistants/Paralegals perform on a day-to-day basis in your organization:

3. In terms of future employment opportunities for Legal Assistants/Paralegals in your organization, do you foresee the future as Excellent, Good, Average, Poor or Very Poor?

5 Excellent

4 Good

3 Average

2 Poor

1 Very Poor

4. Why do you foresee the future in this way?

5. Do you experience any difficulty finding well qualified entry level personnel for Legal Assistant/Paralegal positions?

2 Yes

1 Occasionally

0 No (*Skip to 7*)

9 No response

6. What kind of problems do you encounter?

7. Have you ever employed an individual who graduated from or who has taken courses in the Oakland Community College Legal Assistant Program?

2 Yes

1 Don't know (*Skip to question 10*)

0 No (*Skip to question 10*)

9 No response

8. In general, to what extent was this person(s) prepared for employment in your organization? Were they Adequately Prepared, Somewhat Prepared, or Not Prepared?

- 3 Adequately prepared (Skip to question 10)
- 2 Somewhat prepared
- 1 Not prepared
- 9 No response

9. In what area(s) were they not prepared to work in your organization?

10. In order for our courses to reflect current employer needs, please rate how important it is for entry level personnel to have a strong knowledge base in the following areas using the scale **VERY IMPORTANT, SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT** or **NOT IMPORTANT**:

	<i>Very Important</i>	<i>Somewhat Important</i>	<i>Not Important</i>	<i>Don't Know</i>	<i>No Response</i>
a) Legal research skills	3	2	1	8	9
b) Word processing skills	3	2	1	8	9
c) Other computer software skills	3	2	1	8	9
d) File management	3	2	1	8	9
e) Preparing documents for trial	3	2	1	8	9
f) Attending trials	3	2	1	8	9
g) Direct client contact	3	2	1	8	9
h) Assisting with depositions	3	2	1	8	9
i) Preparing interrogatories	3	2	1	8	9
j) Drafting complaints	3	2	1	8	9
k) Drafting motions	3	2	1	8	9
l) Drafting wills	3	2	1	8	9
m) Preparing commitment papers	3	2	1	8	9
n) Preparing divorce proceedings	3	2	1	8	9
o) Preparing trusts	3	2	1	8	9
p) Preparing bankruptcy documents	3	2	1	8	9
q) Preparing estate probates	3	2	1	8	9

11. Are there any other specific techniques you would like your legal assistants to have learned?

12. Please rate the importance of the following workplace skills for an entry level person to possess, using the scale **VERY IMPORTANT**, **SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT**, or **NOT IMPORTANT**.

<i>Response</i>	<i>Very Important</i>	<i>Somewhat Important</i>	<i>Not Important</i>	<i>No</i>
a) Ability to work as a team member	3	2	1	9
b) Organizational skills	3	2	1	9
c) Ability to use individual initiative	3	2	1	9
d) Writing skills	3	2	1	9
e) Ability to deal effectively with clientele	3	2	1	9
f) Good speaking skills	3	2	1	9
g) Problem solving skills	3	2	1	9
h) Interpersonal skills	3	2	1	9
i) Good listening skills	3	2	1	9
j) Working with minimal supervision	3	2	1	9
k) Working with people from diverse backgrounds	3	2	1	9
l) Knowledge and use of legal ethics	3	2	1	9

13. Are there any other workplace skills you would like your entry level Legal Assistant/Paralegal staff to have? (*Probe*)

14. What advancement opportunities are available for Legal Assistant/Paralegal staff in the legal profession?

15. What is the typical annual starting salary range for entry level Legal Assistant/Paralegal staff?

\$ _____ to \$ _____ /year

16. Would your organization be interested in sponsoring internships, either paid or unpaid, for OCC students in the Legal Assisting program?

a) PAID

2 Yes

1 Uncertain, please explain:

0 No

9 No response

b) UNPAID

2 Yes

1 Uncertain, please explain:

0 No

9 No response

17. Oakland Community College provides highly focused workshops and seminars for employers in the community based on their specific training needs. Are there any specific areas in which you would like to see a workshop or seminar offered?

18. Would you be interested in assisting OCC in the design and development of the Legal Assistant Program? This could include activities such as focus groups, advisory committees.

2 Yes

1 Maybe, please explain:

0 No

9 No response

19. Are there any other comments you would like to make at this time?

Thank you for your time and assistance. We appreciate your help and believe that your responses will help to influence what happens at OCC in the future. If you have any further questions please contact the Office of Planning & Analysis at (313) 471-7746.

Interviewer Signature: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX F

Student Survey

LEGAL ASSISTANT PROGRAM

Student's Name: _____

Student's Social Security Number: _____

1. I am going to read you a list of reasons why students enroll in legal assisting courses. Please tell me if the following statements were a Major Reason, Minor Reason, or Not At All a Reason for you enrolling in a legal assisting course at OCC:

	<i>Major Reason</i>	<i>Minor Reason</i>	<i>Not At All a Reason</i>	<i>No Response</i>
a. To obtain a certificate in legal assisting	3	2	1	9
b. To obtain an associate degree in legal assisting	3	2	1	9
c. To complete courses necessary for transfer . . .	3	2	1	9
d. To prepare for a new career in legal assisting .	3	2	1	9
e. To improve knowledge and skill for your job . .	3	2	1	9
f. For personal interest	3	2	1	9
g. Other (describe) _____				

2. What Is/was your major field of study at OCC?

I _____ LGL

3. What is your current employment situation?

- 0 _____ Self employed
- 1 _____ Employed full-time.
- 2 _____ Employed part-time.
- 3 _____ Unemployed. Actively seeking employment (*Skip to question 10*)
- 4 _____ Not employed and not seeking employment, *because of choice, illness, full time study, retirement, pregnancy or any other reason. (Skip to question 10)*
- 9 _____ No response

4. What is your current job title? *(Be specific)*
5. Is your current job highly related, somewhat related or not at all related to legal assisting courses you took at OCC?
- 3 Highly related
2 Somewhat related
1 Not at all related *(skip to question 10)*
9 No response
6. As part of our review we are attempting to understand the relationship between what is taught in LGL courses and what is required on the job. Could you please describe for me some of the typical duties that you perform on the job?
7. We periodically conduct surveys of employers to help us evaluate the courses and programs OCC offers. Would you provide us with the name and telephone number of your current employer? Your name will not be mentioned if we contact your employer.
- Name: _____
- Contact: _____
- Telephone: _____ - _____ - _____
8. Were there any LGL courses that you found to be **extremely helpful** to you in your work? Could you please explain how these courses were helpful?
9. Were there any legal assisting courses you found to be **not at all helpful** to you in your job? How could those LGL courses be improved to be more relevant?
10. Are there any courses that you would suggest OCC develop and include in the LGL program?
11. How do you plan to use the knowledge and skills gained in your legal assisting courses at OCC, in the future? *(for example, career, future education, personal growth, certificate)*
12. What do you or did you most **like** about the legal assistant courses/program?
13. What do you or did you most **dislike** about the legal assistant courses/program?

14. Please rate your level of satisfaction with the following aspects of the legal assisting program using the scale, 5=Very Satisfied, 4=Satisfied, 3=Neutral, 2=Dissatisfied, 1=Very Dissatisfied.

	<i>Very Satisfied</i>	<i>Satisfied</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Dissatisfied</i>	<i>Very Dissatisfied</i>	<i>No Response</i>
a) The variety of LGL courses offered . . .	5	4	3	2	1	9
b) The relevance of LGL courses to your career path	5	4	3	2	1	9
c) The time of day LGL courses are offered	5	4	3	2	1	9
d) The frequency with which specific LGL courses are offered	5	4	3	2	1	9
e) The quality of faculty/instruction in LGL	5	4	3	2	1	9
f) Appropriate computer software skills taught	5	4	3	2	1	9
g) Internship experience	5	4	3	2	1	9

15. Does the present scheduling of LGL courses meet your needs and/or expectations?

- 2 ___ Yes (*Skip to question 15*)
- 1 ___ Sometimes
- 0 ___ No
- 9 ___ *No response*

16. How can the scheduling of legal assisting courses be improved to better meet your individual needs?

17. Is there any other comment you would like to make about the legal assistant program at OCC?

"Thank you very much for your time and assistance. We sincerely appreciate your help."

Interviewer Signature: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX G

Graduate Follow-Up Survey

Narrative Responses

**Graduate Follow-Up Survey
Narrative Responses**

Q25. We would appreciate any suggestions you have for improving OCC's programs, courses, or services. This information will benefit future graduates. Please use the space below for your comments or attach another sheet.

The support team, i.e. counselors, clerical staff, professors should understand the students are their "Customers" who desire a service. OCC is not customer focused.

Legal courses here are not Michigan Bar approved!

The program was very disorganized, the teachers were poor with two exceptions Judge Mester and Mr. King. The books were not helpful and the lectures were not understandable.

Please expand the Paralegal program. Take a look at O.U.'s. In the same time, O.U. covered a lot more subjects. OCC's program was to general.

I feel the instructors should be more willing to give more "one on one" instruction. In the legal courses [name deleted] needs to realize that people who are starting out have no clue about what to do in a Law Library. She should not treat the students as if they are stupid. Our class signed a petition against her. We never filed it. Instead we showed it to her. She had improved but not until the middle of the semester. Some teachers need to realize we are all individuals.

Get the Legal Assistant program ABA Certified by the State Bar. In legal assistant program it is not ABA Certified. Counselors promised that the school had applied with the State Bar to get the program certified, and when certification came, it would be retroactive and cover students already in the program. When the certification did not take place, several students contacted the State Bar. The Bar stated that no paper work had been received from OCC. They were not working on OCC's certification.

Don't make promises about being ABA approved. It was a waste of time because, had I not been promised about the ABA approval, I could of went to other schools in the area who are ABA approved. Now, I must start over.

Legal Assistant program needs to be ABA approved by the American Bar Association.

Courses in my major (Paralegal) not ABA approved - Job market only hiring 4 year degree & advisors & counselors did not tell me. Very misleading.

I would suggest that all students going into the Legal Assistant program, have some idea of what a law office is like before they start their classes. You "must" learn procedure first, or you will be confused.

The legal assistant course was too general and lacking in practical experience. When I graduated I had general knowledge in bits and pieces but did not feel qualified to work in the legal field.

Improve employment services - Do more active recruiting.

Train or hire an academic advisory staff that know what they are doing, and care. Design an integrated Legal Assistant program. Publish name of instructors for classes prior to registration, because your "DROP" procedure is very restrictive.

It would help students select their classes better if you were to list the names of all instructors instead of the term (staff). Cost of textbooks are very high. Graduation should be offered more than once a year.

Better teachers in Paralegal Department

Job placement office needs to improve.

More availability of classes for students.

Security at Highland Lakes & other campuses - Dark & no security guards. Bad parking arrangement.

Counseling. Academic advising. Not very helpful. I was undecided about a career choice, and feel I really wasn't guided toward an answer. I needed help in that area and it took me a long time to figure it out. I thought counselors could have somehow offered more suggestions about ways to find an answer within myself.

Teachers should try to teach the class more geared to the real world (work place).

Overall it was good. I wish they were more honest about the field you're getting into. They should look at all aspects of the field. It's pretty hard when you're undecided what to do and you have paid professionals who should be able to tell you the chances of getting a job. They should look at all aspects of the field and tell you that others (Lawyers) are looking for the same position and have a better education than you.

I felt they should screen instructors a little better before hiring since we're paying for whatever they pick. I was robbed my time and education for the price I paid for the class and the cost of books which we never used.

I originally enrolled at Oakland Community College to obtain an Associate Degree in Legal Assistance. I was told that OCC planned to receive their ABA accreditation yet that school year. In the 1992/1993 school year, I became aware that OCC still wasn't accredited. I made an appointment with an advisor with the idea of transferring my Associate Degree courses to Madonna University to earn my Bachelor Degree in Legal Assistance. The advisor told me it would not be worth my time and effort to get a Bachelor Degree in Legal Assistance. He said that without experience I probably wouldn't find a position as a legal assistant. At that point, I wondered why I was wasting my time and money paying for classes to earn a degree in a field which I wouldn't be able to find a position. After some serious thought and extensive reading of the OCC Course Description Book, I realized that I was very close to obtaining an Associate Degree in Liberal Arts. I contacted a different advisor and followed that course of action. I also contacted Madonna University and was shocked to discover that because OCC is not ABA accredited, the legal courses I took there would only transfer to Madonna as electives. Had I finished my Associate Degree in Legal Assistance at OCC and then transferred to Madonna to earn my Bachelor Degree, I would have had to repeat all those classes. As it is, I will have to re-take a Litigation class to graduate from Madonna. Money and time wasted. I would also like to take this opportunity to make the school

aware of a very poor instructor named [name deleted]. She was the instructor in Legal Research class that I eventually dropped. As you can see, I graduated with honors and am an excellent student. When I dropped her class, it was to save my grade point average because I wanted to apply for scholarships at a later date. Many other students in my class also dropped, as you can discover by researching your records. This woman was the most rude, arrogant person/instructor I ever met! She told us point-blank that she would not answer questions because no one in real life answers questions and we should find our own answers. What she says about real world may be true. But we were PAYING her to answer our questions. That was her job. If she didn't want to teach us, she should have found another profession. If we all knew the answers already, we wouldn't have needed to attend the college. She also refused to tell us how her marks on our paper (plus, minus, or check) related to grades. She told us to stop worrying about our grades. If grades aren't important, then why does every educational system place such store by them? I feel we had a right to be able to chart our progress. After someone must have complained to her, she told us to ask questions. Unfortunately, someone believed she meant it. That student was berated and derided in front of the class. [Name deleted] took us to the library and gave us assignments and then left. It was obvious that even during class time, she felt she wasn't needed. Of course, since she wouldn't answer questions, I guess there wasn't much need for her there. That was when I decided the best course of action for me was to transfer to a different school. [Name deleted] told us there was no way she could teach us how to do research. She said that it was just something we had to pick up on our own. I'd like to suggest that she take Legal Research and Writing I at Madonna, which is taught by [name deleted]. [Name deleted] shows us a video tape outlining the different types of research materials, shows examples and how to understand what is being shown. Then [name deleted] explains it to us in her own words, shows us more examples on an overhead projector, and then takes us to the law library where she sits with each one of us and explains the proper procedure to use in researching. Maybe what [name deleted] meant was that SHE couldn't teach us, not that it couldn't be done. In the last few weeks I have begun looking for a position as a legal assistant and have been asked repeatedly if I am in an ABA approved program. I am glad I didn't waste my time and money receiving a degree which would not be recognized in the career field I chose. I would like to say that I was mainly very pleased with the education I received at OCC and would recommend it to anyone who is studying something other than Legal Assistance. But between the advisors and [name deleted], I'm glad I transferred to Madonna University.

I wish more campuses could be involved in more of the programs. For example some of the medical fields and Legal Assisting could be offered at Highland Lakes or Auburn Hills and also at SE or Royal Oak Campuses. Also that counselors could be more informed concerning other colleges.

I learned a good deal in the Legal Assistant program at O.C.C. but I don't think that I learned enough to go out into the law field & get a job. All of my interviewers asked me what my specialty in law was. I don't have one, and that is a very important piece of knowledge to have to gain employment. Specialty classes must be offered after the basics in the Legal Assistant Program. The program also needs to be accredited by the ABA.

As a legal assistant with a degree, I strongly feel that OCC should implement an internship for this program. It is virtually impossible to break into the field without any experience as I have found. Otherwise you're reduced to looking for non-related positions or secretarial/clerical positions.

Improve the paralegal program. The field is growing, however, please mention to the students that employers prefer a bachelor's degree. Also, get the course ABA approval.

The Legal Assistant program offered at OCC is limited to litigation. I would like to see courses encompassing; Probate/Wills, Real Estate, Tax, Corporations, Lexis (generally other aspects of law). Also, all of the legal assistants in my firm can type, take shorthand also wordperfect.

Please get the Legal Assisting Program certified.

I graduated OCC with Associates Degree in Applied Science/& also obtained a Legal Asst. Cert. I am proud today that all the hard work paid off. I am presently employed with the 43rd District Court in Ferndale (Deputy Clerk/Research Clerk).

Legal program needs major overhaul. Photography, job placement needs to give more help.

Please expand the Paralegal program. Take a look at O.U.'s. In the same time, O.U. covered a lot more subjects. OCC's program was too general.

The Legal Assistant Program is crammed into too few courses. Torts & Negligence should be one course; contracts and real estate could be another. Typing should be mandatory because legal secretaries are more in demand and are better paid than paralegals with associate degrees. A Criminal Litigation course should be offered, as should working in the legal environment. Legal Terminology is actually an Introduction to law class! There should be a terminology class that, in fact, concentrates on terminology. Trial prep, Discovery & Evidence were too short! In addition, grading was often too easy. I can fully appreciate now, that paper doesn't care what's printed on it when I look at the Cum Laude sticker on my diploma.

Paralegal program would have benefitted from more practical, hands-on courses.

Inform teachers about the courses their teaching. Teachers in Paralegal courses did not teach the things they were supposed to. Inform the teaches exactly what areas they are supposed to cover in their courses.

I feel the instructors should be more willing to give more one on one instruction. In the legal courses [name deleted] needs to realize that people who are starting out have no clue about what to do in a Law Library. She should not treat the students as if they are stupid. Our class signed a petition against her. We never filed it. Instead we showed it to her. She had improved but not until the middle of the semester. Some teachers need to realize we are all individuals.

The Legal Assistant program should be Board Certified.

Get the Legal Assistant program ABA Certified by the State Bar. Counselors [names deleted] promised that the school had applied with the State Bar to get the program certified, and when certification came, it would be retroactive and cover students already in the program. When the certification did not take place, several students contacted the State Bar. The Bar stated that no paper work had been received from OCC. They were not working on OCC's certification.

Legal Assistant program needs to be ABA approved - Am. Bar Association.

Courses in my major (Paralegal) not ABA approved - Job market only hiring 4 year degree & advisors & counselors did not tell me. Very misleading.

I would suggest that all students going into the Legal Assistant program, have some idea of what a law office is like before they start their classes. You must learn procedure first, or you will be confused.

The legal assistant course was too general and lacking in practical experience. When I graduated I had general knowledge in bits and pieces but did not feel qualified to work in the legal field.

The only complaint is from the Legal Assistant Program. The courses were not taught up to a level where one had confidence to go to work. There needed more hands-on work. The teachers were not very helpful. They need new teachers for the program or a different way of teaching.

I was very surprised that one could obtain a legal secretarial degree without taking legal terminology—it was considered a supportive course but not required.

I was happy about the other teachers in your school but the ones in the paralegal program are just terrible. Your placement is awful. If I would have known how things were going to be I would have gone somewhere else.

Train or hire an academic advisory staff that know what they are doing, and care. Design an integrated Legal Assistant program. Publish name of instructors for classes prior to registration, because your DROP procedure is very restrictive.

As I stated above the legal course of study is not prepared properly. Instructors are secured too late for the classes to be able to properly line up their classes, assignments, etc. Books are not in the bookstore in time. Black's Law Dictionary should be available as well as the Michigan Court Rules. Also, there should be more variety of law classes offered as well these should absolutely be not 7 1/2 week classes in any law course.

Better teachers in Paralegal Dept.

Once legal assistant program is ABA approved previous students should be recognized as ABA approved also.

Get the paralegal program ABA approved; from what I understand is in the works already. Some of the legal assistant courses need to be much more detailed because I found a lot of them to be like introductory courses compared to a four-year graduate school; then maybe the course won't need to transfer over as only electives over major credits.

Make course work more challenging. Even though I graduated with a 3.8 GPA, it was too easy to earn the grades. I was rarely challenged. I had perhaps 2 really cool instructors - one was a judge and one a legal assistant, [name deleted]. I prefer more of a university atmosphere.

Don't make promises about being ABA approved. It was a waste of time because, had I not been promised about the ABA approval, I could of went to other schools in the area who are ABA approved. Now, I must start over.

APPENDIX H

Employer Survey

Narrative Responses

Employers Hiring Legal Assistants

Legal Assistant Employer Survey Narratives

- Q2. Please describe the specific job duties/responsibilities that Legal Assistants/ Paralegals perform on a day-to-day basis in your organization:**
01. Assist attorneys in prosecutor's office, Friend of the Court, Circuit Court, Corporation Counsel; assist with the legal procedures and conduct legal research. The legal assistants assist in the court Administrator's office. Handle grant applications and keep track of statistics for grants. Also, supervises appointments for attorneys on Michigan Assigned Appellate System. Paralegals in the Friend of the Court keep trial book up to date; they're used as case assistants and help Friend of the Court attorney referees handle hearing and supervise cases on caseloads (for domestic relations cases).
 02. Drafting pleadings, answering complaints, interrogatories, depositions, court scheduling, and office management.
 03. Represents court in litigation and research for judges.
 04. Medical and deposition summaries, keeping the file in order, Medical records review, administrative work, witness lists, and location of people.
 05. Oversee bankruptcy files; take assignments from attorneys; understand procedures and protocol; maintain parking ticket files; do personal property tax collection work; research information on people/corporations for tax collection; go into court to represent city in small claims court; prepare follow-through, file, send-out/serve post-judgement, discovery motions, have computer literacy; know how to work on computer systems.
 06. Does research, and writes opinions for judges. Also, depends on the judges needs.
 07. Have two attorneys and one legal assistant under the supervision of an attorney, makes assessments of client's legal problem. Discusses problems/cases with attorneys, does research, prepares legal documents under supervision of attorney, represents attorney at legal hearings, has first contact with client; about the only thing legal assistants can not do is represent the client in court.
 08. Great deal of research, telephone contact with citizens, look up ordinances, prepare memos, and prepare motions.
 09. The firm has 17 different subgroups of paralegals. They do: legal research, document organization, client interviews, if the paralegal are CPA's or have a real estate license, they will prepare the actual documents. Paralegals also attend depositions, assist in trial preparation, draft and review employees benefit plans, prepare minutes for corporations and submit them to clients, they also attend legislative sessions at the state and federal level, tend to immigration matters, submit routine documents to federal departments (labor, commerce, IRS) for approval or review. Paralegals also participate in the closing of financial transactions (real estate, bond insurance). Within the firm, paralegals are responsible for organizing meetings, preparing the minutes of those meetings and making presentations for marketing or educational purposes. Paralegals are also involved in personnel, manual preparation, and the review of estate planning documents. They also perfect assets transferred to trusts.
 10. Paralegals are broken into groups; litigation, corporate, real estate, and employee benefits. They do document analysis, maintain witness files, economic analysis, pleadings files, and digesting depositions.

11. Everything - handles interrogatories, processing lawsuits and claims, handles some legal questions, works with defense attorneys, reviews incident reports, and sits on some committees. Investigations of claims, takes over some lecturing for the risk manager, does new employee orientations and helps with seminars.
12. Maintain database of claims history for hospital, respond to attorney requests, (gathering info, answering interrogatories), act as liaison between hospital counsel and outside requests that come in, and handle auto claims.
13. She's a claims assistant, having a medical background helped her to get the job; prepares interrogatories, handles claims (medical malpractice), arrange depositions (scheduling), requests medical records, sends copies to attorneys and insurance people, does research for attorneys, usually in the medical record, and handles "potential claims."
14. Answer interrogatories, sets up and performs interviews, insurance malpractice, work with institutional review committee, and reviews drugs and clinical workers who want to use them on patients. Works with physician contracts, and verifying employment on physician.
15. The paralegals assist the attorneys in these areas: Litigation, Bankruptcy, Corporate, and Real estate.
16. Answer interrogatories, respond to EEOC charges, public/product liability, trademarks (and renewal of), consumer protection issues, attorney general inquires, vendor garnishments and levies, and summarization of medical records.
17. The legal assistants are broken down by department, the department dictates the responsibilities. Litigation legal assistants do litigation preparation through trial assistance. Corporate legal assistants deal with corporate documents, trademarks, patents, and probate.
18. General support litigation, maintain files, and probate. Paralegal in this firm do not do legal research.
19. Litigation, probate, real estate, bonds, public finance, and environment are the areas that are generally given support.
20. Reviewing medical records; preparing depositions; preparing summaries for trial purposes; linking up witnesses, organizing files, organizing mock trials, whatever is done in the firm, they are involved. Preparing exhibits, researching expert witnesses backgrounds, preparing aids for trials, and doing title searches. Domestic cases, putting together finance, income and property information.
21. Each judge has one assistant. Control case files between clerk's office and courtroom. Do research for judges on pending cases. Write requested opinions for judges.
22. Prepare interrogatories, investigation work, do summaries of medical records and mail, computer entry on lawsuits, review attorney bills, make court appearances with attorneys.
23. Follow up on law suits with outside attorneys, prepare interrogatories, do medical record case summary, and go to court with attorney. Have input into mediation summaries. Does some risk management. Follows up on some patient complaints, occasionally, after Patient Advocate handles them but if this is a case, perhaps after a patient has refused to pay a bill.
24. They have 9 or 11 different legal assistants. They work in the trust department, collections (loss prevention), litigation, and real estate transactions.
25. Draft letters and send out, prepares promissory notes, documents of transfer (mortgages and deeds), income tax returns and accounting, manager trusts and estates, books and records, and proper disposition of gifts by will, trust or out right.
26. Legal assistants have their own case load, law suit has not been filed yet. They do interrogatories, witness statements, interview clients, take photos, and paralegals file in

- court. Paralegals and legal assistants perform different duties within this firm. The legal assistants work more closely with the attorneys.
27. Depends on attorney they work for - some do paper processing/filing, others do depositions, interrogatories, subpoenas, appeals etc.
 28. Work for two attorneys and two law clerks. Perform job of stenographer and legal assistant. Look up statistics/variances in ordinance book, criminal and misdemeanor pre-trial work, and pre-trial docket, work with spouse and domestic abuse clients.
 29. Firms specialty; Probate, estate immigration, corporate parts of law. Work closely with attorney on cases, work with clients, prepare documents, do research, prepare for trials, and document management.
 30. A tax oriented law firm, do probate/estate tax work, assist in preparation of estate tax and post - death tax plans.
 31. Interview clients, do legal research on assigned cases on social security /public benefits, work-up cases, present cases at hearing under supervision of attorney, write briefs. Anywhere the law permits, we use paralegals/legal assistants. Do immigration, AFDC public benefits work, do general intake interviews, screen clients, present cases at acceptance hearings.
 32. Hire legal assistants/paralegals to do counter work. Help citizens with criminal/civil actions; on fully automated system, do data entry; case management; handle case loads for magistrate, civil, misdemeanor cases.
 33. Interview clients; draft pleadings; file cases with courts and do follow through; case management; factual/investigational development; some research; memorandum preparing; pre-trial statements; meditation summaries.
 34. Research and writing, filing papers with the court.
 35. Drafting documents and reviewing with attorneys (mostly drafting corporate documents). Some of our legal secretaries also perform these duties.
 36. Drafting contracts for corporate litigation, reviewing documents, reviewing files at the courthouse, and research (most recent graduates not able to do this very well).
 37. Coordinate litigation, set up deposition, research, and prepare trademark applications and copyrights.
 38. Product liability firm. Involved in discovery of findings, scheduling, deposition, answering interrogatories, file reviews, client contact, responsible for all discovery deadlines, and trial preparations.
 39. Scheduling, managing files, prepares a few motions; generally, covering gap between attorney and secretary. Do very little legal research.
 40. Firm specializes in Insurance litigation, almost anything. Prepare/answer interrogatories, manage/review documents, extrapolate information from documents, prepare/attend depositions, send out correspondence, answer complaints, and rarely do much legal research.
 41. Everything but represent the Board in court. Does represent the Board in Small Claims Court and in MESC hearings. Does initial memorandums for attorney, and does the research in the law library.
- Q4. *In terms of future employment opportunities for Legal Assistants/paralegals in your organization, do you foresee the future as Excellent, Good, average, Poor or Very Poor? Why do you foresee the future in this way?***

01. EXCELLENT. More and more judges using paralegals as court clerks. Budgetary reasons - cheaper than law students and also the turn over is not as great. A law student will leave when he/she graduates from law school but a paralegal will stay on.
02. GOOD. Paralegals are beneficial, not only private but municipal.
03. POOR. Funding - anticipation one retiring with no replacement.
04. VERY POOR. Too many legal assistants out there - not enough legal secretaries, secretaries can do a legal assistant's work, but not vice versa.
05. POOR. There is no money/budget to create jobs.
06. POOR. In district court, the cases are not that complex.
07. GOOD. Elder law growing, under title 3b funding, legal services are mandated by the state, and state law jobs are not high paying in social service area.
08. GOOD. Their department likes having a paralegal. They are done with school schedules or bar exams; they are usually steady and reliable.
09. GOOD. Pressure of client demand at lowest price.
10. GOOD. Lawyers are learning how to use paralegals (as well as are the clients), therefore anticipate that the work load will be greater in 5 years.
11. POOR. Just hired one part-time person and already have another full-time.
12. POOR. The workload is not enough to where they'd hire anybody else.
13. AVERAGE. In risk management there just aren't many positions - small hospital.
14. GOOD. So overloaded they need extra help. Risk management department is a fairly new dept - just established 5 years ago, so they find that their responsibilities are growing.
15. GOOD. We have increased slowly - with each addition of an attorney, we add a paralegal.
16. GOOD. It's economical to employ legal assistants.
17. GOOD. The legal assistant program has been in place for a long time. It is seen as beneficial to both the firm and the clients.
18. GOOD. Law firms will have to become more cost effective, it's a client driven market.
19. AVERAGE. Too much hype out there on the future need for legal assistants.
20. AVERAGE. The trend has changed. Law firms are becoming overwhelmed with having law students as legal assistants. They can do the work of legal assistants, they are not paid benefits, get low salary. They work for work experience for future employment. The economics of law practice have changed, much competition between firms, clients want the most they can get for the least amount of money. There is still a place for legal assistants but not as great as in the 80's.
21. AVERAGE. Nothing changes. Each judge has to have a legal assistant.
22. AVERAGE. Already have four paralegals, not sure if they'll expand.
23. GOOD. They will always have a need, in process of hiring couple of paralegals right now.
24. GOOD. No response.
25. EXCELLENT. There will always be a need.
26. EXCELLENT. Because the work load demands it.
27. AVERAGE. The need for a third person (paralegal) has not been demonstrated.
28. AVERAGE. Low turnover in city office, small department.
29. GOOD. Law firm is good size, has large clients - the firm needs good legal assistants.
30. EXCELLENT. Legal assistants have a proper place in a law firm.
31. EXCELLENT. Costs of paralegals/legal assistants are cheaper. By using paralegals/assistants, the company can utilize attorney staff on work they must do. Helps

- in recruitment of attorneys. If attorneys know that they do not have to do a lot of the "grind work", they're more likely to take a job with us.
32. GOOD. As we progress, the court field is becoming more specialized. Never at a loss for business, future always brings more court cases. Need good, quality trained and educated people.
 33. AVERAGE. In this market, have three major law schools. Attorneys would rather deal with law clerks.
 34. AVERAGE. The elderly partner prefers law students to paralegals, I don't necessarily agree, but they feel law students are better educated in all aspects of the legal profession.
 35. GOOD. We will continue to hire as we need people.
 36. EXCELLENT. Especially in larger firms, the trend will be to hire more paralegals to handle what attorneys now do to keep costs down.
 37. VERY POOR. We're going through many internal changes currently at our firm.
 38. AVERAGE. Firm presently employs four legal assistants, not looking for any more.
 39. AVERAGE. Firm just hired a paralegal. Small firm. Depends on whether business decreases or increases.
 40. GOOD. Firm may have opening for a legal assistant in the future. Firm does a lot of in-house training - often trains secretaries to do legal assistant work.
 41. POOR. We are in the midst of employee cutbacks because of budgetary problems.
- Q6. What kind of problems do you encounter with entry level Legal Assistants/Paralegals?**
08. No skills, no experience.
 10. Poor writing, immature, specialty background/knowledge lacking. For example, Environmental Law.
 11. Looking for a very specific area. Want someone with health care background.
 15. We want people with a four-year degree along with paralegal certification. We'll take someone with an associate degree and prior work experience, but certification alone isn't enough.
 18. Writing skills not up to par.
 19. In specified areas only, examples; probate, environment not in litigation though, there are plenty.
 20. Assistants are not trained for a specific type of work. Hard to find people who can fit into our group. Insurance Defense Firm.
 25. People with B.S. and B.A. degrees are needed. Also, good writing and accounting skills are needed.
 26. No problems with the legal assistants, but they do have problems with the paralegals. Their interviewing skills are not up to par, they don't obtain enough information.
 27. They've been lacking in interpersonal and verbal skills.
 29. Poor work ethic; want a 9-5 job, a legal assistant must be flexible to work hours needed, sure legal assistants will not seek more education or do research independent to get up to speed to meet firm's needs.
 36. Aren't skilled in research, not familiar with Michigan Court Rules.
 37. Not qualified in the intellectual propensity field, our firm is very specialized.

38. Students, law firm, and legal profession have different definitions of legal assistant's role. In our firm legal assistants do a lot of typing and a small amount of research and writing. Many students do not expect to do typing.

Q9. In what area was the OCC student not prepared to work in your organization?

29. Not a good work ethic.

Q11. Are there any other specific techniques you would like your Legal Assistants to have learned?

01. Good writing skills, good research skills.
02. Good people and communication skills, a person who is sensitive to the public.
03. Preparing legislation, to take care of issues and the legislative process.
04. Every firm handles legal assistants differently, law clerks do research and writing.
05. Have fundamental education background because every firm teaches individual methods of doing things.
06. Know how to write opinions.
07. In regard to administrative hearings, knowledge of entitlement programs, social security; knowledge of pension rights.
09. Reading, writing, analysis skills, can't emphasize those enough, culture of law and law firm, and law as a business (bottom line).
10. A good training exercise would be to give students a 2" stack of papers and have them draft a chronology of significant events that are based upon the documents with which they are provided. Students would need to analyze the documents to determine who the key players are so their deposition can be taken. Students need to sift out important documents.
11. Communication skills, investigation, and analytical skills.
15. Good writing skills.
16. Strong writing and speaking skills, self starter - team player skills.
18. Deposition summaries, working knowledge: register of deeds, probate courts, students need a more realistic view of what legal assistants will be doing on the job. (i.e. not running the firm). An unpaid internship would shed some light on what they'll be doing.
19. Deposition summaries, some type of training in medical area, medical records, and medical terminology.
20. Good discovery knowledge (generating, responding), know what discovery tools are, know practical discovery applications, implications. Know timing of responses. Know how to integrate themselves into the firm, how to review and produce documents. Understand how privilege applies; know "buzz" words.
21. People skills, how to communicate. Need to know how to deal with public, to make public understand court procedures. Legal assistants are the link between the judge and the public.
22. Interviewing and investigation; emphasizes importance of legal research writing.
25. Accounting and writing skills are needed.
26. Sharper interviewing skills, knowing how to ask the right questions.
27. Verbal communication skills, a modified Dale Carnegie course that teaches you how to think on your feet.

28. How to type warrants.
29. Emphasis on litigation, knowledge of data bases, document management, how to organize and define key documents. Firm uses Lexus software.
31. Training in handling own administrative hearings, are on their own at questioning evidence, on how to present and argue cases, and need advocacy classes.
32. Have excellent communication skills to deal with public, criminals, bench, and bar.
33. Client interview techniques, factual development.
34. Being able to properly file legal papers with the court; getting orders entered, filing motion, etc.
36. In litigation - Knowing procedural rules.
37. OCC should offer more in the way of electives. Oakland University offers one class in patents, trademarks, and copyright, and even this isn't enough for prospective applicants of our firm. Most firms today specialize, and students should have the opportunity of choosing from a wider range of courses.
38. How to draft a letter, writing skills, and good quality training in Word Perfect.
40. Emphasize file management skills.
41. Good writing skills to prepare legal research and memorandums for opinions. The stronger the computer research skills are the better qualified one would be for employment.

Q13. Are there any other work place skills you would like your entry level Legal Assistant/Paralegal staff to have?

07. In working with older people, patience and good hearing skills.
10. Maturity, attention to detail, "don't lose the forest in the trees", and survival skills.
11. Prioritizing, crisis management skills; should realize when something's over their head, should know their limitations and when to ask for help. Also need to work on punctuality.
12. Interviewing skills.
13. Work experience in medical.
14. Ability to handle interruptions, juggle a lot of different tasks at the same time.
18. More reasonable expectation of the job itself.
20. Efficiency, and ability to see something through to conclusion.
22. Office economics and management.
25. The use of a dictation machine.
35. Professional telephone etiquette.
40. Emphasize on organizational skills.
41. Emphasize on organizational skills.

Q14. What advancement opportunities are available for Legal Assistant/Paralegal staff in the legal profession?

01. Entry level is court clerk, can go on as case assistants - make more money.
03. Move on to Magistrate, possible judge.
05. Become legal administrator, more firms are hiring for this job.
08. Advancement should be good. First advancement with city would be to full-time employment.
09. Salary advancement, variety of work done, entry into legal administration.

10. Salary bonuses and increased responsibility at the firm - or the opportunity to move on to a better firm.
11. Small department but a person can start off as a Legal Assistant, then advance to Paralegal, Assistant Risk Manager, and then Risk Manager.
12. Need a BA or BS to advance to the next step in job hierarchy, but extenuating circumstances and certain job specifications might permit someone with only an associate's degree in LGL to advance.
13. As a claims assistant, yes. Only other advancement in hospital would be requiring a medical or legal degree. Might get a patient advocate if you had a medical background.
14. No definite path of advancement; depends on circumstances.
15. To senior legal assistant position then to legal assistant manager (limited opportunities).
16. Promotions to: different levels of legal assistants, their experience has allowed them to move to different departments within the organization.
17. To legal assistant management.
18. Legal assistant management
20. Legal assisting as defined is an end point. Firm has never had a legal assistant become a lawyer in the firm, although many have left to go to law school. Have no hierarchy of legal assistants.
21. Move on to city attorney assistant, join the legal counsel for the city (Royal Oak).
22. Only had legal assistants for four years, so can't really say, seems like once you're a paralegal always a paralegal, unless you go on to law school.
23. Very limited advancement within Beaumont organization itself - can advance to perhaps risk management position somewhere else, or law office that handles malpractice suits.
25. Increased responsibilities, increased pay.
27. Some organization have a paralegal hierarchy. For example, paralegal 1,2, and 3 depending on years of service. There's always the opportunity.
29. Change in status, may advance to Senior Legal Assistant and assume more responsibilities.
31. May advance up steps in paralegal staff. May become supervisor of paralegal staff.
32. All positions are posted both internally and externally. Try to promote from within first.
33. Not a lot. If one comes in where there is a staff of 20 legal assistants, can move to the top of that group. Without further training they top-off at that level.
34. I don't know. In our practice there really isn't any type of advancement opportunity.
35. Especially in litigation, the more responsibility you can assume the more indispensable you are, the more you earn.
36. As you become more experienced, you can take on more and more.
37. Increased experience equals increased salary. No other advancement unless you go to law school.
38. Little unless one goes to law school.
40. In large firms, Legal Assistant Manager.

Q17. *Oakland Community College provides highly focused workshops and seminars for employers in the community based on their specific training needs. Are there any specific areas in which you would like to see a workshop or seminar offered?*

03. Understand Garnishment orders.
04. Specialty areas: Asbestos, defense, plaintiff, and probate.

09. We train internally for substantive matters, seminars would be needed only for remediation purposes.
10. In the corporate area: more specific, more sophisticated transactions, eg. incorporation papers - basic set of articles of incorporation, buy-out stock, Environmental Law; regulatory matters, litigation, etc.
11. Focus workshop on health care area, medical malpractice area.
16. Medical records course.
18. Law office expectation, how to navigate your way through Wayne County Probate Court.
20. May be a need to teach a "Dictionary" class, thoroughly focus on pertinent discovery; tools, scope, how to use, and how to respond.
22. Computer skills for legal assistants is very important, interviewing, investigation (refresher courses), and medical terminology for people in health care institutions.
27. Terminology for administrators, a workshop that describes the roles of the legal secretary, the paralegal and the attorney, how they overlap, and how they are unique (the dynamics).
28. Class on how to deal with the public, have a lot of fragile clients. (eg. spouse/domestic abuse clients).
32. Conflict management course. Have to deal with angry, difficult people at courts, training on how to handle these people would be helpful.
39. Organizational skills.
40. Medical records for legal assistants, what to look for, how to summarize, how to digest, medical terms, and medical abbreviations.
41. The board does not need this class but believe others could use, Document Organization classes.

Q19. Are there any other comments you would like to make at this time?

03. Most district courts do not have paralegals or legal assistants, more at the circuit court level.
07. Based on my experience, a legal department suffers without the services of a good legal assistant. Legal assistants do all the work, the attorneys get all the credit.
11. Thinks there's a need for paralegal. Thinks hospitals offer more diversity in the job. Very fascinating area and would be a rewarding career. Also, insurance companies use paralegals with health care background as claims adjusters. Here are a few sources for the legal assistant department to contact for students seeking potential employers:
 - 1) Michigan Society of Health Care and Risk Management
Patricia Fowler, President
 - 2) Michigan Physician Mutual Liability Association
Debra Piazza 1-800-968-2421 or 1-810-647-5550
 - 3) Kitch, Saurbier, Drutchas, Wagner and Kenny
1-313-965-7900
14. There's a great need for them in future, especially for someone with a health care background.
18. Despite what the articles and reports say, the demand for legal assistants will not be all that great because of increasing technology and because so many out of work attorneys.

20. Legal assistants have to understand there is a current issue of economics in the legal profession. Employees have to know how to market the firm as economical, need to deal efficiently, understand what it is to make the firm profitable. They need to understand where they stand in the niche, what they do professionally impacts on their position.
21. The courts and city attorney's office work closely together, what is good for one is good for the other.
22. Hands on experience is extremely helpful. The real job world is completely different than the legal assistant thought it would be, found out that she didn't know it all. Internships would be more helpful if they were geared specifically to what a person will be working on, i.e., Don't have a student go to court for an internship when he/she will be working in a hospital later.
25. Avoid becoming a mill, turn out quality students, and I discount G.P.A. of a community college students (A 3.0-4.0 doesn't mean much).
29. Students should know the law, know what is expected of you as a team player, and understand the litigation process.
33. Would like to be considered for employment on OCC's teaching (legal assistant) staff. May contact her at her office. Taught part-time at Lansing Community College and Conley school of Law. Very interested in the outcome of the survey.
41. Have great respect for legal assistants. They perform the "nitty gritty", the difficult work.

APPENDIX I

Employer Survey

Narrative Responses

Employers Not Hiring Legal Assistants

Legal Assistant Program Employer Survey

EMPLOYERS WHO DO NOT EMPLOY LEGAL ASSISTANTS/PARALEGALS

Does your organization employ Legal Assistant/Paralegal staff?

01. No legal research is done in this division - thus no need for paralegals. However, we do employ college students and college degree people to do clerk-type work.
02. Recent law school graduates prepare reports pending on appeal. They write appellate briefs which are too cumbersome for legal assistants to handle.
03. Not in budget - this is not the private sector.
04. No need for paralegals in probate mental division. In juvenile, there might be a need, but there is no money available.
05. For budgetary reasons.
06. Research attorneys do the work.
07. Paralegals have not been utilized thus far, but there are plans to begin in January 1995.
08. No need, no funding. We don't give legal advice or do legal research, we have people in the office performing work similar to that of a paralegal, but they are not classified as such.
09. It's never been a practice here. We have law clerks who do that type of work. I don't know that paralegals are employed in this area in general. Try calling in Oakland County or downtown.
10. No need for it. High volume district courts might. Judge does own research. Most stuff - briefs, etc., presented by attorneys.
11. People with just as associate's degree in LGL are not hired. They must also have a Bachelor's degree, in anything, besides their associates's degree. These employees come under the Executive, Administrative, Professional Division, and everyone in this division must have a BA or BS as a minimum requirement to get hired.
12. Usually have college students in internships. Don't have paralegal classifications. Just have general secretaries or general clerks. No legal secretaries, either. Someone with an LGL degree wouldn't use that background in a court, it helps with terminology and basic procedures but that's it. Paralegals would have a better chance getting a job with a private law firm. Said students should look in Detroit Legal News and Pontiac/Oakland Legal News for jobs. Also, contact Legal Administrative Association.
13. Never found a need; Clerks keep court docket, they have 6 or 7 deputy clerks plus a court administrator. Don't have legal secretaries, either.
14. Not in budget, don't handle cases as large as Circuit court. Judge does his own research. General clerks keep docket up to date.
15. We have one legal person, he is the Vice President of Legal Counsel. His Executive Secretary performs the LGL tasks and he trains her specifically in what he wants done.
16. Hire attorneys for legal research, want people with law degrees. Most people hired are recent law school graduates.
17. Not hired due to the court size and budget not allowing the flexibility to hire paralegals, LGL tasks performed by judges and their recorders.

18. We employ one legal law clerk to do the needed work. This person is a 2nd year law student who works as a court officer/research clerk. Paralegal work is done at a minimum of this level with on the job training.
19. No need. LGL tasks - performed by judge or law clerk which is a 2nd or 3rd year law student.
20. Lack of money, small size, would like to but not within the budget. LGL tasks done by judge. (A 1 judge courthouse)
21. Judge does not feel a need, he does all his own research.
22. Due to size LGL tasks are performed by Judge, court administrator, much of the work is done by computer.
23. Don't need - Judge does own work.
24. Judge doesn't want them, never hired them. LGL tasks - Judge does his own.
25. Contract with University of Detroit, Urban Law Clinic to perform needed tasks.
26. Judge does his own research.
27. Small court - Judge does own research.
28. No funding - LGL tasks - Judge does his own.
29. Judges use CD roms for research. They have not expressed a need for legal assistants or paralegals.
30. Bargaining unit does not allow for their hire. Interns from Eastern Michigan University do LGL tasks.
31. LGL tasks are performed by non-paid interns from Macomb Community College.
32. LGL tasks done by court officer who is an on staff attorney. Research done by city attorney along with prosecutors office.
33. No room. LGL tasks performed by legal secretaries.
34. Not a need on the district level. Paralegal work done by the legal secretary.
35. Not that big - Judges do their own research.
36. No need - Judges do own and receive briefs from attorneys.
37. Not a need. If unlimited resources it would be useful, the city attorney does hire paralegals, however we do not, judges do own research.
38. We are within a larger corporation. I worked with the legal assistant for 17 years. Now I am the secretary. The corporation had to cut out and lay off people. Our legal assistant was laid off. We do not plan on hiring in the future.
39. No need for legal assistants. Have 33,000 new cases/filings each year but most are traffic tickets which are handled by the magistrate. The judges have time to research /review. We have a judicial secretary and court recorder who help out.
40. Judges have people who have passed the bar exam assist them, some are called Court Officers. Individual judges may employ legal assistants but the central staff does not hire them.
41. In general, the Ann Arbor area is flooded with law and social work interns. We have the ability to get people who are interested in doing internships free from U of M Law School.
42. Small district court with two judges and one attorney. No place for legal assistants. The cases we handle do not require research. The cases handled are "run of the mill and limited" what research that is required is done by judge or attorney. The functions of the magistrate must be done by a licensed attorney. We hire a probation officer, must have a BS in probation for that position.

43. Not needed, this is a state agency where people come to commit family members to a mental institution. Our only legal involvement is by doctors who go to court to testify with regards to the mental state of a person who might be committed. Attorneys in such proceedings are provided by the probate court.
44. We use an outside law firm for legal affairs.
45. Very small facility and corporate counsel handles everything. Mr. Beigler himself does all the so-called "grunt" work (research). Our insurance carrier provides us with legal counsel. Typing, clerical duties are done by regular secretaries and if it's something really sensitive, the administrative staff handles it.
46. Budgetary concerns - used to have an attorney working for me but that position was eliminated due to budgetary reasons. Actually, we never have used any paralegals. I do my own research and brief writing and my executive secretary does the typing and other clerical stuff.
47. Our specialty is workmen's compensation defense, the secretary and attorney work very closely, there's no room for a middleman i.e. legal assistant. Lawyer does own research.
48. We tried paralegals at one time, but it didn't work - there was not enough cooperation on the attorneys' part, they wouldn't provide the mentoring needed to get the paralegals to where they needed to be.
49. We have one person who's the Risk Manager, but she's a nurse. All other legal matters are sent to the Dept. of Mental Health in Lansing, which in turn contacts the Attorney General's office there. The Attorney General's office handles everything.
50. Risk Manager is not an attorney, no legal counsel on hospital staff. They use outside attorneys and legal matters go through either the Risk Manager or Human Resources Dept (if it pertains to union employees).
51. No job classification for Legal Assistant/Paralegal. LGL duties are handled by a Registered Nurse - she is a part-time Patient Advocate and a part-time Risk Manager. The hospital contracts two different outside law firms for legal affairs and the Patient Advocate/Risk Manager works in conjunction with these attorneys on legal matters.
52. Haven't found a need, Huron Valley is part of the Detroit Medical Center so they utilize the parent group's resources. Detroit Medical Center has its own Legal Affairs Dept. and also an insurance company so Huron Valley uses them.
53. Hospital does not have a job classification for legal assistants or paralegals. We use an outside law firm to handle legal matters.
54. Have a Risk Manager and support staff (clerical) in Risk Management Department. Legal affairs are taken care of by an outside law firm which the hospital has been using for about 30 years.
55. Employ interns but not full-time paralegals. The county has never budgeted for a paralegal. Macomb Co (16th circuit) uses attorneys as research staff. The qualifications of a paralegal must change in order for them to be beneficial to the circuit court - they seem to be trained to perform clerical functions and to do legal research. Paralegals need to be trained to analyze factual information and be able to do more in-depth research.
56. No need. The judges secretary acts as his legal assistant. Employed a law student for the summer.
57. The individual justices hire assistants who have completed law school but may not have taken the bar exam. They act as independent researchers. They work in direct contact

- with the justices. Each justice reviews resume's that are submitted to them and hires from that.
58. Currently hire law students to work in the judicial chamber. Do a variety of administrative duties, research, and review opinions. They are called court officers or law clerks.
 59. Lack of room. Lack of money. No need. Judges prefer to do own research work.
 60. Don't know why not. Believe we had a posting/opening which was never filled, could be a salary problem. We could use one.
 61. No staff capacity for this. Have several court clerks who do the jobs.
 62. No funding from our control unit. Judge McNally, Ms. Ralulian and the judge's secretary do the work.
 63. The legal assistants we use are law school students. The jobs at the circuit court require more skills/knowledge/training than a legal assistant has. Most of the legal assistants have a law degree. Because the court is located near Michigan State University and Cooley Law School, we can be more selective in choosing legal assistants who carry the title law clerk.
 64. We used to hire legal assistants, but now we hire law clerks (student). It's more economical for us.
 65. We only hire law clerks in their junior or senior year. We feel that it is important to give prospective lawyers a training ground to get started in the profession.
 66. Have law clerks plus each attorney has a legal secretary who does some of the work of a legal assistant.
 67. In the past we have used law clerks, but do not have one a the present time. Attorneys seem to prefer that. This is a small firm with 3 attorneys. The legal secretaries do the client contact for the firm.

APPENDIX J

Student Survey Narrative Responses

**Legal Assistant Survey
Student Narratives**

Q6. As Part of our review we are attempting to understand the relationship between what is taught in LGL courses and what is required on the job. Could you please describe for me some of the typical duties that you perform on the job?

01. Keeping appointment book, scheduling attorneys for motions, depositions, answers to interrogatories, legal brief, deposition summaries.
02. Filing motions, typing, writing briefs.
03. I do legal research on real estate. I use litigation, corporate practices. I utilize everything I was taught. The West Law system is excellent! OCC taught us things some attorneys have forgotten.
07. Work with legal dept. - defending product in court cases.
10. Research for inmates at Oakland County jail, send inmates materials.
12. Preparing law suits for attorney, prepare garnishments.
22. Type pleadings, keep appointments.
23. Prepare documents, prepare pleadings, accounts payable/accounts receivable, billing, and hiring and firing.
25. I do all the legal research to present to the lawyer, the accounting, prepare all the pleadings, and I also call and talk to the different courts.
26. Take and type pleadings in personal injuries, file pleadings in different areas. Discovery.
28. Typing up documents, organizing files, and dealing with clients.
31. Typing from lawyer dictation. Prepare files for court.
32. Type pleadings patent applications, some research (patent searches).
39. Research proof of claim for bankruptcy companies, request medical records for estate dept. in firm, updating client cases, and serves papers.
41. I hold down the office while he's (the attorney) is in court. Drafting pleadings, explain deposition process to clients, do interrogatories, court filings, putting together judgements (property settlements), trust/wills and real estate paperwork, powers of attorney, and accounts payable and receivable.
43. Document review, assist lawyer in preparing for court, prepare for filing documents in court, and case management of docket.
47. Legal aspects of Real Estate, knowledge of Business Law.
49. Prepare the following: Court papers, pleadings, and discovery process. Also perform other clerical duties.
54. Analysis and system design, similar to research done in legal classes.
57. I do legal research, use litigation documents, perform administrative duties; such as answering phones, filing, and maintain our law library.
60. I perform litigation backgrounds of physicians for Providence hospital. I check to see if a physician has had too many malpractice suits to hire them or keep them at the hospital.
61. Typing, answering phones, filing, faxing, and other clerical duties.
63. I do legal research and do document preparation.

64. Research criminal cases, delivers documents.
66. Research, legal terminology.
73. Legal research, briefing, assignment clerk, processing pleadings.
74. I assist the attorney in gathering research for them on bankruptcy cases, civil cases, and divorce cases.
77. File documents, have documents signed by judges.
78. Oversee staff of 6 people; assist members with credit counseling; set policies and procedures; review credit.

Q8. Were there any LGL courses that you found to be extremely helpful to you in your work? Could you please explain how these courses were helpful?

01. Discovery - the basis for a law suit. It tells you exactly what you need for a law suit - a foundation course.
02. Litigation course - it's a basic course. Legal Research 1 and 2, Trial Preparation, really all of them were helpful.
03. The Legal Research courses 1 and 2, and Business Law. In Business Law they taught us how to write contracts and read the fine print. In Legal Research 1 they showed us how to find related cases and in Research 2 it went on.
07. Course was pretty broad - just touched on product litigation, which is what I specialize in. More of a general law course - gave good overview. Substantive Law (Just took this one course).
10. Legal Research 1 and 2 - getting to the cases to do research.
12. Business Law - banking system, consumer lending contracts. Legal Research - how to use law library for research purposes.
22. Business Law - optional course.
23. Legal Research 2 - it helped prepare legal pleadings.
25. All of them were helpful. It's like learning a foreign language. You need all the courses to really understand the law at the office.
26. Judge Mester - Substantive Law - to dissect cases and write summaries helps in my present job.
28. I liked the Legal Research courses 1 and 2. They were very informative about research in the field. I use the knowledge from that class at my job.
32. Litigation - types of language used in a law office.
39. All courses have been helpful.
41. Discovery Class - Helped explain to clients what is expected in a deposition (Mr. Kolly was an excellent instructor).
43. Legal Research 1 - taught how to look up cases and what books to use.
47. Business Law - Understanding of legal research.
49. Research class was very helpful.
54. The classes were helpful in the real estate field (in which I deal as part of my business), Legal Research 1 and 2.

57. Litigation class was super. It taught step by step how to prepare documents. And in Trial Preparation we actually held a mock trial. I had a real case. In Legal Research we went to the library and learned how to interpret the law.
60. Litigation taught a complete overview of the legal system. Discovery of Evidence taught how to properly obtain evidence, it was very informative.
63. Research 1 and 2, before I didn't know how to do research, but I feel they should even do more research, and also try more on showing document preparation.
64. They all helped.
66. Legal Research - to find what is needed.
73. Litigation - An overall view of civil law, not boring, offered a little of everything. Legal Research 2 - doing research, Mr. Kolly and Mr. Cassar (Business Law 1) great instructors.
74. Trial Preparation. The course explained everything on how to prepare for a trial. We were given assignments that were like a real job in the field of legal assisting.
78. Legal terminology - helpful in reviewing title work for property.

Q9. Were there any legal assisting courses you found to be not at all helpful to you in your job? How could those LGL courses be improved to be more relevant?

23. The teacher I had for Discovery, [name deleted], it was his first time teaching the course, I learned nothing at all. He's good at teaching the evidence course, but not the discovery course.
41. Litigation - could apply very little to my work situation.
43. Legal Research 2 was not relevant to me because my firm has the law clerks do that kind of work.
60. Legal Research was especially confusing. I did not understand what the goal of the class was. I felt like I did not learn anything.
66. Substantive Law.
78. Substantive Law - Get a different instructor. The teacher was a judge who could not present material so that students could understand it. Student felt the class was a waste.

Q10. Are there any courses that you would suggest OCC develop and include in the LGL program?

01. Legal terminology for lay people to help them understand legal jargon.
02. More specialty courses - probate, family law, etc.
03. To become ABA approved.
04. More specialized legal classes, examples: corporate law, and real estate law.
05. Immigration laws.
08. Offer classes more than once a semester. Need to be an ABA approved program.
10. More specialty courses - tax law, real estate, probates, family law.
12. Criminal law, bankruptcy law.
15. More specialized and variety of class such as the immigration.

17. Maybe add a class more on criminal aspects. Like Criminal Evidence, more criminal process law.
21. Break up substantive law course: into smaller courses (2 or 3 classes) example; torts, contracts.
23. Weekend internship program for those who work during the week.
25. A legal terminology course should be required. It should be a co-requisite class.
32. More specialized classes. Examples: Patents, trademarks, and copyright law.
33. A Legal writing class.
36. Another legal terminology class perhaps.
38. More specialty courses needed i.e. Bankruptcy.
42. Legal writing.
45. Evidence should be pre-requisite for Trial Preparation.
47. More computer classes - Few classes that were combined to separate and be more in depth.
48. A mandatory work-study program should be required, i.e. law office co-op.
50. Need to have more day classes, I've only seen evening classes. If a class is cancelled in a semester, you have to wait an entire year to take it again! Need more classes offered!
52. Terminology class.
54. One course on Real Estate.
55. Classes need to be more extensive on the legal research courses. I learned a lot, but we hardly used the library.
56. Bigger library needed, more specialty courses needed.
57. They should add a environmental law course. I'd like to see Family Law and Bankruptcy added.
60. OCC should develop specialized electives in certain areas where the students would pick what they wanted to take. They could offer immigration law, corporate law etc.
62. Additional Trial Practice, case law. How to think like a lawyer - legal logic.
63. OCC should add Probate or Family law courses. There should be a bigger variety of laws taught.
64. Environmental Law, Criminal Law, and Family Law - specialty courses.
65. Evidence class along with Trial Preparation.
68. Program needs to be accredited by the American Bar Association.
69. Courses need to be expanded. Substantive Law should be made in to 4 or 5 different classes. One in probate courts, family law, and criminal law classes.
70. Legal writing with documents should be added to the schedule.
71. Legal writing, case law and statutes Immigration law.
72. One course in planning your career for the legal assistant.
73. Trial preparation courses, more on criminal law.
76. More specialty courses i.e. estate planning and legal writing.
77. Evidence should be taught before trial preparation.
78. Courses in wills and bankruptcy, workers compensation.
80. Legal terminology class.
82. More specialty courses. i.e. family law.
83. Legal terminology.
84. Everything is geared towards civil suits - should have more courses for criminal law.

86. Should have courses in legal writing, would be very helpful in relation to the legal research classes.
87. I feel Trial Preparation and the Preparation of Evidence should be combined into one course. They are both closely intertwined.

Q11. How do you plan to use the knowledge and skills gained in your legal assisting courses at OCC, in the future? growth, certificate)

01. A combination of above to upgrade what I'm doing now. I am thinking of going to law school.
02. For career reasons.
03. I use everything in my job that I learned. My children see how hard I study and it will rub off on them.
04. Work as paralegal for a personal injury law firm.
05. Career.
06. A career in the legal assisting field, once I retire from what I'm doing.
07. Law school in the distant future perhaps.
08. I plan to go on to Cooley Law School.
09. Legal assistant → law school.
10. Personal growth and career maybe as preparation for RSAT.
11. Career in a law firm and go on to become a lawyer.
12. To become a legal assistant and for personal reasons " I just like it."
13. I plan to go to law school.
14. Career advancement in Bank law.
15. To get a good job.
16. A career as a legal assistant.
17. To become a paralegal eventually.
18. Get job as legal assistant and then go on to law school.
19. Future education and career in Law.
20. I plan to become a paralegal, if I can with this degree.
21. All the above. Work as a paralegal first and eventually go to law school.
22. Improve position at work and present skills.
23. For career reasons, to advance pay.
24. Career as legal assistant.
25. I used my knowledge to become a legal assistant.
26. Use at current job.
27. Look for a paralegal job.
28. I'm going to try to become a legal assistant.
29. Career.
30. Planning to finish education at a 4 year college. Also, think I gained important legal information that would be useful in my life.
31. Further career.
32. Hopefully move into paralegal position.
33. Career in legal assisting.

34. Future education.
35. Career.
36. I would like to work for a lawyer as a legal assistant.
37. Career.
38. A career in legal assisting.
39. Perhaps law school, to improve my knowledge for my current job.
40. I plan to go on to law school. I hope to one day work in a court house.
41. Personal growth and career.
42. Career.
43. For career purposes and future education.
44. For my own knowledge. I was thinking of going into paralegal job, but decided this wasn't the field for me.
45. Future education and eventual career in the legal field.
46. To become a paralegal and perhaps law school.
47. I'm not sure, probably be an independent contractor in legal research.
48. I'm planning on becoming a paralegal.
49. To grow within my job.
50. For a job in law, or legal assisting.
51. Career.
52. Independent contractor for legal technician.
53. Career, education (law school).
54. A career supplement.
55. I hope to become a legal assistant in the future.
56. Career, to become a legal assistant.
57. I plan on transferring to Walsh College in Troy for accounting, I'm not sure exactly what I want to do.
58. To obtain a job in the future.
59. I plan to go on to Wayne State's Law School.
60. I have gained a promotion from the courses, from legal assistant to senior legal assistant, I use it in my job.
61. Might come in handy if I was a receptionist at a law firm.
62. Possible law school.
63. I plan to use my skills for improving my job now.
64. The knowledge is keeping me afloat until I get into law school.
65. My son is planning on being a lawyer and, I will want to work in his office.
66. Help in current employment.
67. Just had jury duty and was very helpful for that. Know more about law and judicial system; helpful in everyday life situations, i.e. car accidents. Now I know what to do if somebody sues me.
68. Future education and career as a paralegal.
69. Yes, I plan to go to law school.
70. I plan to attend Oakland University to become a paralegal.
71. Unsure - volunteer services at court house to gain more experienced.
72. Future education, pre-law and then law school.
73. Career path, maybe law school.

74. I plan to go on to Oakland University for legal assisting, and later become a legal assistant.
75. I'd like to eventually become a legal assistant.
76. Career, personal interests, future education (Oakland University, Political Science).
77. Career.
78. Thinking of going to law school.
79. I'm going to try to get into Human Resources at my job using my legal course background. I work for Northwest Airlines and other positions require legal background.
80. Would be helpful if a person started a business.
81. Thinking of going into business dealing with bankruptcy.
82. Career as a legal assistant.
83. Career as legal assistant and law school eventually.
84. Thinking of going to law school.
85. I'd eventually like to go on to law school.
86. Look for paralegal job.
87. In a career dealing with the advocacy of the aging and elderly laws.

Q12. What do you or did you most like about the legal assistant courses/program?

01. The encouragement from the judges and lawyers who taught the classes. The value they placed on legal assistants.
02. The internship was a good learning experience - it should be a requirement/mandatory.
03. The teachers were great. They made it very easy to learn.
04. Instructors.
05. Meeting instructors.
07. A lot of open discussion. Instructor was an attorney and was a pretty good teacher.
09. The classes were very interesting, we learned very much.
12. The professors, because they work in the legal field. I like the campus and the program.
13. The instructors knew what they were talking about, and brought their real life experiences to class.
14. The fact that the program was offered at a convenient location.
16. The instructors, and the experience in writing that we received.
17. The instructors, I had Oakland County Judge, Judge Mester, and he gave me his individual help when I needed it.
18. Was challenging - a lot of work but enjoyed it. Going to the courthouse gave you a real feel for the legal profession. Thought the instructor who took the class there, Mr. Kolly, was great.
19. Teachers.
21. The instructors - their knowledge, they're good with people, very helpful.
22. Field of law and understanding of employers position and what they do.
23. Judge Mester's classes are interesting.
24. The Research classes 1 and 2, and the Litigation class.
26. Teachers like Judge Mester.

27. The instructors did a good job - Judge Mester.
28. I especially liked that the teachers are so understanding. They did not give us a very heavy homework load. I liked that since I worked full-time.
29. Instructors.
30. All teachers were willing to help me on a personal basis. Met me at library on their own time to help me - was very much appreciated.
31. Teachers.
32. Legal Research.
33. Contact with the attorneys and judges, working in the field (they're the instructors).
34. Instructors, Convenient location, affordable.
35. Knowledgeable teachers willing to help in their free time.
36. The way the instructors shared their experiences (cases) with students. I learned a lot from that.
38. Instructors - knowledgeable, approachable, helpful.
39. Trial preparation with Judge Mester - I really had the chance to see what a legal assistant does.
40. I just like the subject of law. I've always been interested in law.
41. The courses were interesting.
42. Experienced instructors giving their first-hand experience.
43. Having the attorneys as teachers, the practical knowledge they bring to class.
44. Liked all the research.
45. Judge Mester - getting his experiences.
46. Field trips to court houses.
47. Teachers.
48. I liked the fact that the professors are lawyers and judges and that the classes are small enough for them to get to know you.
49. Instructors: very helpful, knowledgeable, approachable.
50. That real attorneys were teaching the courses. They could explain legal issues as they really are.
51. Just interested in the law.
52. Love the program - hands on experience and research aspect.
54. Substantive law - easily applied to current affairs.
55. I find law to be an extremely interesting subject.
56. The first law class.
57. I learned more about what goes on in the legal field, and I can apply it to my job.
58. The teachers were good. I learned a lot, but it has been so long since I was there that I don't really remember.
59. The professors. They didn't waste my time, they treated the students like adults, and they were always there to answer questions.
60. The professors, they were willing to answer all my specific questions. All were available for my individual help and needs.
61. Liked instructor, Judge Mester.
62. Knowledge and information given by instructors.
63. Judge Mester was very knowledgeable. The preparation of evidence class was very informative.

64. All of my teachers were helpful and understanding.
65. The teachers gave a good understanding of the law.
66. Enjoy the subject.
67. Enjoyed the instructor for Substantive Law, Austin Howard. Had great classmates - same people in classes all the time and we developed a certain camaraderie.
68. Small class size - more attention given to the student.
69. Sarah Keiden was excellent. She is co-director of the program.
70. I liked Judge Mester for Trial Preparation. I will be having him in the fall for Legal Research.
71. Judge Mester brings in a new perspective to Legal Assistant program.
72. They were factual, interesting, active. Camaraderie between students in classes. I never felt I was wasting my time.
73. All the classes addressed students as adults.
74. The teachers were great. They help you when you need help on your assigned cases. The teachers are actual lawyers in the field.
75. Judge Mester for Litigation course. He was great. I really liked his personality and his patience.
76. Legal Research 1 and 2, and Trial Preparation.
77. Excellent teachers.
78. The challenge; just the legal knowledge and being able to solve my own problems.
79. All the courses were interesting and they were all inter-twined with each other. I especially liked learning how to do research and how to prepare evidence.
80. Teacher was cool - Mr. Howard. Was very helpful with legal terminology.
81. Last instructor, Judge Mester. He took classes into his chambers for instruction.
82. Hands on experience at the Oakland County Courthouse and instructor, Douglas P. Kolly.
83. The courses in general.
84. Practical applications - research helpful. Can better understand the concepts.
85. I really liked the Legal Research course. I enjoyed the class content and learning to do legal research.
86. Some instructors were great - Mr. Kolly and Judge Mester.
87. The instructors were available to help the class. Judge Mester was excellent.

Q13. What do you or did you most dislike about the legal assistant courses/programs?

01. The internship experience. The placement opportunities are limited, but it is set-up now.
02. I didn't care for the fact that all the courses were offered at night.
04. Being put off about the American Bar Association accreditation.
05. Driving to Oakland County Courthouse.
06. [Name deleted] - intolerant, made students feel uncomfortable in Research 1. Every lawyer is not a teacher.
08. Legal vocabulary - had nothing to do with anything I needed to learn.
09. The times and infrequency of class offerings.

11. Only a few classes are offered each semester. Missing one means you might have to wait another year to take that class.
13. That it is not American Bar Association approved.
14. Teacher who taught Legal Terminology and Business Law II. He may be a great lawyer but not a good teacher.
16. Some of the courses were not well thought out, i.e., Substantive Law.
18. Only one location for classes - had to drive in from Pontiac and the traffic was terrible. Classes at Auburn Hills would have been easier to drive to.
19. Not American Bar approved.
20. I was told it was same as Oakland University and now I find I have to go to Oakland. It is not ABA approved.
21. Certain courses are not offered with enough frequency - it's too easy to get behind.
22. Research.
23. Some of the classes were held in Pontiac, I didn't like the travel. I also dislike the infrequency of class offerings.
24. Lengthen the Discovery and Evidence course duration - too much information to cover. Trial Preparation should be structured more uniformly between instructors. Restructure course so that students have computer basics before starting Trial Book.
25. The courses were only offered at night at Orchard Ridge. I came in from northern Clarkston so it took an entire hour. It was too far so I finally dropped out.
26. Distance from parking lot to classes in winter. Change in location of classes in mid-semester. Pontiac is not a convenient location.
27. Didn't dislike anything about LGL courses but thought it was too cold in a lot of the classrooms.
28. Some teachers were overbearing. They expected too much.
30. Classes only offered at Orchard Ridge. Southfield or Royal Oak would be closer to my home.
33. Limited course offerings throughout the year.
34. Was not certified by American Bar Association.
35. Had to take classes during the summer.
36. Legal Research I - part-time teacher walked in cold and had problems running the course.
38. One instructor had a problem communicating, but that is all. (She may have been a good attorney, but not a good teacher.)
41. [Name deleted], who taught Research I, was not a good instructor. She was rude, insensitive, had no patience with students. She did not bring her expertise down to the student's level.
42. A teacher who is no longer teaching.
43. Because I had some experience as a legal assistant, some of the courses were too basic.
45. Course timing - summer classes should be optional.
46. Offering time of classes - once a year or only on Saturdays or evenings.
47. Internship program - hoped to incorporate my skills learned to get experience. I was used as a gopher. Used as free labor.
48. Disliked the fact that grades were based on attendance. Instruction in Legal Research I - not the teacher's fault - It is more the way the class was structured.

49. They have moved some of the courses from the campus to the courthouse.
50. Some of the attorneys did not have legal assistants in their offices and they were teaching us to be legal assistants.
52. One teacher, too much traveling.
54. Library Research - required to go to law libraries at Oakland City Circuit Court.
55. Some of the instructors. At the end of the semester, they had us fill out evaluations and we then could vent our frustrations.
56. Legal Research I (more time needed to complete the amount of work required).
58. The college lied. I was told the program would be ABA approved and it is not. I'm upset.
60. In my classes, some students were disruptive and would leave early. I wish some of the professors were more authoritative, and in control of the classes.
64. Courses were not offered frequently enough. If you missed a class, you had to wait another year to get it again.
65. Teacher - Legal Research - was not understanding about student problems and emergencies.
66. Cannot finish quickly - no late afternoon classes, only evening classes.
67. Didn't dislike anything. Also, went to Henry Ford Community College and liked OCC's program better. Did not like instructor, [name deleted], who taught Computer 105 - he belittled people in class when they asked a question.
68. Needs to concentrate on research skills and library use.
69. The fact that there is no screening process. Everyone is let into the program. This is a very demanding profession and OCC should screen out people.
71. One of the professors was absent on three occasions with no replacement. Students were expected to turn in work in his absence and grades were marked down (if late). Professor was not responsible enough to find a replacement in his absence - believe he should not be paid for missing time. Dislike professors who leave early and cannot answer questions - they need to be available to student's needs.
72. Location of courses at Orchard Ridge. They should be spread out over the entire campus system.
73. Absence of law library.
75. For my Legal Research II course, I had to go to the courthouse. I live near Orchard Ridge, I felt we should have had class at OCC, we did not do any research in the courthouse.
76. Courses were not tough enough. They should be more rigorous.
77. Timing of classes.
78. Substantive Law course.
79. Just the fact that you start in the fall and end in summer. I had to take all the required courses at once. I did not have a problem but I saw that, if you were not able to get into a class or take a requirement, it could set you back.
80. Presented too much material in a short amount of time - too much information to digest.
81. Not enough handouts - books too informative. Students wasted time with irrelevant questions. Legal terminology was difficult.
82. Too many unnecessary prerequisites - unrelated math/science courses - associate degree related courses.

83. Legal office environment - professor wasn't thorough - class didn't pertain to legal assisting - got nothing out of it.
84. Too civil oriented.
85. I just wish the library were open longer on weekends. Or, if they offered some type of computer connection where I could get into the library files on computer.
86. The instructors that were new and unorganized - [name deleted].
87. For Legal Research I, my instructor was teaching for her first time. It was difficult for me since we were both beginners.

Q16. How can the scheduling of legal assisting courses be improved to better meet your individual needs?

02. Offer more day classes.
04. Should not need to wait a year to take a class that may have been missed. Some day classes need to be offered. More than two classes a semester should be offered.
05. Offer courses more than once a year.
06. Offer more classes (frequency) during a semester.
08. They need to offer the three summer courses more often than just in summertime. I take time off in summer. They need to add these courses in the fall as well.
09. A greater frequency of offerings - offer more courses during the day.
12. A greater frequency of course offerings is needed - classes should be offered more than once a year.
14. Current schedule forces you to go year round. Should be offered more frequently to allow for time off.
16. There should be a greater frequency of course offerings.
21. Offer courses twice per year. It couldn't hurt OCC and it would benefit the students.
22. Schedule classes more often.
23. Discovery, Trial Preparation and Evidence should be offered more frequently.
24. Discovery, Evidence and Trial Preparation should be offered more times a year.
25. Classes could have been offered at different campuses.
27. Needs only two more classes and want to take them in order but the one needed is offered after the other class. Offer more classes in spring and summer.
28. Have courses offered more often during the year. The cycle is terrible.
29. Offer classes more frequently, instead of at specified times.
30. More courses offered each semester - not just two or three that they have each term.
35. Some classes need to be taught during the day not only at night. Three classes taught only during spring and summer semesters.
36. I don't like to wait a whole year to take a course that I might have missed earlier. More frequency of course offerings needed.
41. A greater frequency of offerings is needed.
43. A greater variety of courses needed to be offered each semester.
45. More varied times for classes - do not like taking classes during the summer.
46. Offer more daytime classes.
48. A greater frequency of course offerings are needed throughout the year.

49. Move the courses back to campus from courthouse. A greater frequency of offerings is needed - more than just once a year.
50. Offer more courses during the day. Also, have courses offered at more times and different semesters.
51. Courses need to be offered more frequently.
54. Schedule day and evening courses.
55. At least offer the same classes twice in a year. The hardest subject, Trial Preparation, was only offered in summer and that is a seven week course. Too much to handle in summer.
56. More classes needed to be offered each semester.
62. Offer classes more than once a year.
64. Students need to be reminded to stay on track because the courses are not offered frequently enough - offer the courses more than once a year.
66. Offer late afternoon classes.
69. The one class, Preparation of Evidence, should be offered more.
71. Make more hours available - classes offered spring/summer should be offered at other times. Prerequisites for some classes, e.g., Trial Preparation.
78. Offer more weekend classes; variety of classes offered during spring and summer.
80. Offer more of a variety of classes during the day and afternoon. Seems like they have more classes in evening.
81. Classes should start later - 6:30. Should have classes on other campuses besides Orchard Ridge.
82. A greater frequency of course offerings are needed throughout the year.
85. The program goes in a year cycle. It would be nice if you could start in the fall or the spring. They should offer two starting cycles.
87. Offer more daytime classes.

Q17. Is there any other comment you would like to make about the legal assistant program at OCC?

01. It's a good program overall. I will be glad when it's ABA accredited - it will make us more competitive - although I feel well prepared to compete in the job market without it.
02. The program is very good.
03. Just get ABA approved.
05. Computer people are extremely rude.
06. I wish it was ABA approved.
07. Was pretty satisfied with class.
08. They need to become ABA approved.
10. Those of us graduating before the ABA accreditation goes into effect, should be offered the opportunity to take another class, or something else, that would help make our certificate accredited, too.
13. OCC should be ABA approved.
14. Judge Mester is a very good instructor.
15. I enjoyed taking the classes but wished there were more specialized classes.

16. Students were not kept abreast of the ABA accreditation process. Upset about finishing up the program without the accreditation. The accreditation was promised when I entered the program two years ago and it has never come to fruition. Also upset with Business Law II instructor (R. O. campus, summer of '92) - he provided little direction to the class - the students were expected to learn much of the material on their own. This instructor prided himself on this and I did not agree.
17. Everything was super, and still is super.
18. Should have a progress report with some instructors - have special counselors for LGL students. I am in a quandary about how to proceed with job search now that I've graduated.
20. The cycle needs to go in the right order. It doesn't make a difference what I say. I did not get the ABA approval like I was told.
21. It's a good program, the classes, the instructors. They make it fun.
25. It needs to be ABA certified. They always said it would be.
27. Thought the OCC library was very helpful.
28. The cycle is a real problem in how it only starts one semester a year.
32. Program needs to be approved by the American Bar Association.
33. I would like to see the program ABA certified.
34. Needs to be accredited by the American Bar Association.
36. When is ABA approval coming? We're waiting. It's needed to get a job.
39. I'm real happy with the program.
40. It is fantastic. I really like the instructors in the program. I learned a lot about the law.
41. I'm holding off completing the program until a decision is made on ABA certification. I am paying out-of-county tuition.
42. Evidence should be taught before Trial Preparation.
44. Everybody was great. Not much else to say.
45. It's great and learned a lot. However, some class scheduling needs to be expanded - especially, to make summer classes optional.
47. Needs to be accredited by the American Bar Association - if taking a person's money. Need to allow every opportunity for that person to find a job. Perhaps a placement service might even be set up to help people find a job after completion of the program.
48. I think it's a good program. I've enjoyed it.
50. They should have a separate course dealing with West Law as well as Lexus computer course. Lexus is the main computer system used in legal assisting.
54. The program is excellent, but the program needs to be accredited. This made me reluctant to finish. Overall, satisfied.
55. The courses need to be available more frequently than one time a year. I had to wait to take a course because of the scheduling.
57. There are excellent instructors in the legal program.
58. I was told the program would be ABA approved and it's not. They lied, and most jobs want you to be ABA approved.
59. I loved everything. The instructors were excellent.
60. Was pretty satisfied with one class she took.
63. It's a very good program but it needs a broader variety of laws included (like corporate law) and not so much concentration on solely litigation processes.

64. Very happy with program. Everything applies to work world just right.
65. Discovery and Evidence should be 15 weeks. Trial Preparation and Litigation should be expanded.
66. Doug Collie - exceptional instructor well organized and gets the point across to the students.
67. Was very satisfied with OCC's program and would recommend it to other people. Learned a lot but felt legal assisting just wasn't for me so I changed my major to engineering.
69. No spoon feeding should be allowed for the students. It could be a real good program. It should be restructured like nursing. Screening should be a lot tougher. Need to know how to write. The prerequisites need to be enforced more. ABA needs to be completed. Sarah Keiden needs to run the program - has the best interest at heart.
70. It's an excellent program. I've had no problems at all.
71. Teachers should let students know of special classes such as Immigration Law, names of attorneys to give aid to and learn from their experience - both sides would benefit. Advisors don't know what they are talking about, often they give a list of classes but are unsure of requirements. Also, different answers are given from different advisors on the same question.
72. I wish it would be an ABA approved program.
73. Legal assisting is a growing field. Legal assistants are gaining respect. It's nice that OCC acknowledges that fact.
74. The legal program goes in order. It only starts in the fall. If you want to start the program in spring, you cannot. Maybe they could offer the classes all the time. That way, you would not have to wait to start the program.
75. I would like to see more law books in the library. Last time I went, they had very few law books.
76. OCC needs to offer student chapters of professional associations, i.e., Legal Eagles, American Bar (for networking, etc.).
78. Thought Mr. Kolly was a good instructor - brought it down to the layman's level. However, many of the other instructors, who had other jobs besides teaching at OCC, weren't able to present material in an understandable manner.
79. In spring semester, there was a Monday evening class which was cancelled. Then the Thursday night class had 40 students in it. They should offer classes more often. I, for the last year, had to take my requirements. All the classes were relevant and interesting.
80. Teachers could give more personalized instruction - more one-on-one interaction.
81. Should be accredited by ABA.
82. Substitute general applied science course requirements for more hands-on computer program courses (with legal law programs).
84. Overall, was satisfied with program. Thinks ABA accreditation would be good.
86. Was bothered that OCC wasn't certified by ABA. Also, had to set up own internship - [name deleted] is in charge of this but failed to do anything. I, and other students, had to scrounge around for internships.
87. OCC should become ABA approved.

APPENDIX K

Michigan Bar Association Legal Assistant Survey

STATUS REPORT RE: LEGAL ASSISTANTS/PARALEGALS*

Please answer the following regarding the legal assistant(s) with whom you work closely. If your answers are entirely different for each legal assistant, please copy the survey and complete it for each one. Feel free to make any comments or to explain any of your answers. Indicate whether any of the questions are not applicable to your legal assistant(s).

* "Legal assistant" and "paralegal" are used synonymously.

1. Do you work with legal assistants? Yes. No. [If Yes, skip to #4.]

2. If No, why not? [Check all that apply.]

- I do not know how to use a legal assistant.
- I would prefer that an attorney or law clerk do the work.
- Legal assistants are not cost effective.
- My previous experience with legal assistants has not been satisfactory.
- My secretary performs legal assistant tasks.
- I cannot afford to hire a legal assistant.
- Other. Please explain: _____

3. Would you like some information regarding legal assistant utilization? Yes. No.
If so, please contact us, c/o the return address on this survey.

[If you do not work with legal assistants, please skip to number 48, below.]

4. I have worked with legal assistants for _____ years.

5. Their level of experience: _____ years. 6. Their level of education: _____

7. Why did your firm/business initially decide to hire legal assistants? [Check all that apply.]

- Economic reasons: Explain: _____
- Needed in-office support for attorney who was frequently away.
- A legal assistant was a more economical alternative to hiring an associate.
- Needed help with tasks that attorneys did not want to perform.
- Wanted to keep up with current trends.
- Needed to free up attorney's time, so practice could be expanded.
- Use of legal assistants was recommended by other attorneys.
- Use of legal assistants was recommended by management consultant.
- Use of legal assistants was requested by the client(s).
- Other: _____

Listed below are pairs of descriptive statements. For each pair, please indicate the "grade" you would assign to your legal assistants. [If any subject does not apply, please skip to the next subject.]

BILLING						
	A	B	C	D	E	
8. Always meet billing goals.						Never meet billing goals.
9. Always exceed billing goals.						Never exceed billing goals.
10. Billing descriptions are detailed/clear.						Billing descriptions are not detailed/clear.
11. Billing descriptions are rarely questioned by client.						Billing descriptions are often questioned by client.
12. Legal assistant hours are rarely written off.						Legal assistant hours are often written off.
13. Legal assistants have proven to be very profitable for the firm/my department.						Legal Assistants have proven to be a financial liability to the firm/my department.
14. What are your firm's annual billing expectations for legal assistants? _____ hours.						

QUALITY OF WORK						
	A	B	C	D	E	
15. Quality of work is excellent.						Quality of work is poor.
16. I am confident in legal assistant(s)' abilities.						I am not confident in legal assistant(s)' abilities.
17. Legal assistant(s) are challenged by the tasks assigned.						Legal assistant(s) are working below their abilities.
18. Legal assistant(s) have a good grasp of legal issues related to their assignments.						Legal assistant(s) have a poor grasp of legal issues related to their assignments.
19. Legal assistant(s) offer good suggestions re: how to accomplish the task at hand.						Legal assistant(s) offer poor suggestions re: how to accomplish the task at hand.
20. Legal assistant(s) have excellent writing skills.						Legal assistant(s) have poor writing skills.
21. Legal assistant(s) always follow through on tasks.						Legal assistant(s) never follow through on tasks.
22. Legal assistant(s) have excellent organizational skills.						Legal assistant(s) have poor organizational skills.

WORK ETHIC						
	A	B	C	D	E	
23. Legal assistant(s) are always available when needed.						Legal assistant(s) are never available when needed. (See #31, below)
24. Legal assistant(s) always meet deadlines.						Legal assistant(s) never meet deadlines. (See #32, below)
25. Legal assistant(s) respond well to constructive criticism.						Legal assistant(s) respond poorly to constructive criticism.
26. Legal assistant(s) can tolerate my moods.						Legal assistant(s) are too sensitive to my moods.
27. Legal assistant(s) thrive under pressure.						Pressure negatively impacts legal assistant(s)' work product.
28. Legal assistant(s) are very interested in the tasks assigned.						Legal assistant(s) are bored with their work.
29. Legal assistant(s) understand the ethical guidelines regarding attorney supervision of their work.						Legal assistant(s) do not understand ethical guidelines regarding attorney supervision of their work.
30. Legal assistant(s) are very willing to work late to get the job done.						Legal assistant(s) are unwilling to work late under any circumstances.

31. Legal assistant(s) are not available when needed because:
 Others are competing for their time.
 My other assignments fill all of their time.
 They are out of the office frequently.
 They have poor work habits. Explain: _____
 Other: _____
32. Legal assistant(s) do not meet deadlines because:
 They are overwhelmed with work.
 They have poor work habits. Explain: _____
 They have poor attendance.
 Other: _____

CONTACT WITH CLIENT/OUTSIDE COUNSEL (Indicate which applies)						
	A	B	C	D	E	
33. Legal assistant(s) have frequent contact with clients/outside counsel.						Legal assistant(s) have very little contact with clients/outside counsel.
34. I encourage legal assistant(s) contact with clients/outside counsel.						I prohibit legal assistant(s) contacting clients/outside counsel.
35. Clients/outside counsel compliment legal assistant work often.						Clients/outside counsel never compliment legal assistant work.
(Corporate/in-house attorneys, skip to number 40.)						
36. Clients are informed and aware of what tasks are assigned to legal assistants.						Yes: No:
37. Clients suggest tasks that should be performed by legal assistants.						Yes: No:
38. Clients question tasks that are assigned to legal assistants.						Yes: No:
39. Clients question the billing rate for legal assistant work.						Yes: No:

40. Are you aware of the National Association of Legal Assistants (NALA's) certification examination (CLA)? Yes. No.
41. Do you feel that the CLA designation helps to identify a legal assistant's qualifications/abilities? Yes. No.
42. Should legal assistants be licensed? Yes. No.
43. Do you encourage continuing legal education for legal assistants? Yes. No.
44. Will your firm/business pay for their continuing education? Yes. No. If no, why not? _____
45. Have you expanded the role of your legal assistant(s). Yes. No.
 Why not? _____
46. If Yes: Why? Because... [Check all that apply.]
 Legal assistants demonstrated an ability to take on more tasks.
 Legal assistants were professional.
 I could use all help I could get.
 Legal assistants asked that their role be expanded. [See Question 47, below.]
 Legal assistants educated me as to their additional capabilities.
 The client demanded greater participation by legal assistants.
 It made good economic sense to expand legal assistants' role.
 Legal assistants can perform some tasks better than attorneys.
 The new ethical guidelines re: legal assistants enabled me to expand their role.
 Other: _____

47. If your legal assistant(s) asked that the role/level of responsibility be expanded, were you:
 Very receptive to these suggestions and expanded his/her role.
 Receptive but nothing has been done yet.
 Not receptive because: _____

48. Location of firm/business: _____

49. Type of firm/business: _____

50. Your partnership level/title, etc.: _____

51. Number of attorneys in firm/business: _____ 52. Number of legal assistants: _____

53. Comments: _____

Thank you for your assistance with this survey. The results will be discussed in the Legal Assistant Section's presentation at the annual meeting of the State Bar in the Fall of 1994. We would be happy to hear your comments there.

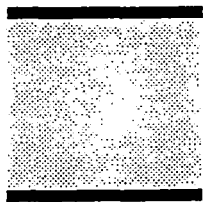
Please complete by July 31, 1994.

After completion please fold and tape/staple this booklet so that the return address is visible.

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Do Not Write Below This Line

Legal Assistants Section
State Bar of Michigan
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APPENDIX L

Michigan Bar Association "SITE VISIT REPORT"

SITE VISIT REPORT

**Oakland Community College
Legal Assistant Program
Farmington Hills, Michigan**

June 6 and 7, 1994

**Ann M. Dodds, Member
ABA Approval Commission**

**Sharon A. Schafer
Paralegal
Consumers Power
Jackson, Michigan**

**Terrance Mitchell
Director, Legal Assistant Program
South Suburban College
South Holland, Illinois**

Oakland Community College ("OCC") has applied to the American Bar Association for approval of its Legal Assistant Program ("Program"). This site visit was conducted on June 5 and 6, 1994. The visit consisted of the following activities:

- Meetings with administrative officials of the college including George Keith, Campus President; Carol Brown, Academic Dean; Dave Adams, Chair of the Business Administration Department.
- Meetings with Martin Orlowski, Director Office of Institutional Planning and Analysis; Roger Zapinski, Counseling Department; Jamie Mason, Associate Dean for Student Services; Willie Lloyd, OCC Placement Office.
- Several meetings with Sarah Keidan and Mike Kinney, Co-Directors of the Legal Assistant Program of OCC.
- Luncheon meeting with teaching faculty including Sheldon Stark, Laura Gould, Irma Gillis-Heck, Ashley Lipson, and Austin Howard.
- Meeting with eight current Program students.
- Meeting with five Program graduates.
- Tour of classroom facilities and Program office.
- Observation of two legal specialty classes.
- Tour of Oakland County Law Library.
- Breakfast with LGL Advisory Board including discussions with Sheldon Stark, Ray Cassar, Vickie Haughton, Judith Christie, Debbie Vargo, and Dave Adams.
- Tour of OCC on-site legal collection and meeting with Tom Haug, Library Department Chairman.
- Review of several documents including examinations and assignments; library inventory; new course outlines; student evaluations of faculty; internship and materials dealing with college placements and statistical compilation of student information.

SECTION I: GENERAL INFORMATION

G-101 - G-107

Oakland Community College is a publicly supported two year institution which was founded in 1964 as a comprehensive community college and opened in September 1965. In 1967, the Orchard Ridge Campus opened its facilities in Farmington Hills, Michigan. Currently, Oakland Community College is comprised of five campuses which are managed by four presidents. Oakland Community College currently offers ninety career associate degree programs. The Legal Assistant Program is 1 of 22 programs offered by the Department of Business Administration. The primary campus for the Legal Assistant Program is the Orchard Ridge Campus. The Orchard Ridge Campus serves approximately 600 to 900 students who are enrolled in credit courses.

Oakland Community College (OCC) is accredited by the Commission on Institutions of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. In the fall of 1992, the total enrollment of OCC was 29,363 students, 20.7% of which were full time and 79.3% of which were part time students. The college had, at that time, 299 full time faculty and 124 administrative and management personnel; 75% of the revenue of OCC was provided through state and local funds and 25% of the revenue of the college was generated from student tuition and fees.

The Legal Assistant Program (Program) was founded in 1987 and is organized under the Business Administration Department. The Program has graduated approximately 120 students to date and had an enrollment for the spring 1994 term of 83 students enrolled in legal assistant (LGL) courses.

The enrollment of students in the spring 1994 term who declared an LGL major, but who were not necessarily taking legal assistant courses during that term, totaled 211.

SECTION II: ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION

G-201

The Program was first offered in the fall of 1987 and was initially organized and administered by Dave Adams, the Chairman of the Business Administration Department. The need for establishing the Program was based on the college's commitment to provide career programs designed to meet emerging needs of the community and to provide necessary training and education for associate degree level employment. The need for the Program was determined by reviewing projections available from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and through informal conversations with members of the legal community. No formal "needs assessment" study was conducted to determine that a need for an additional legal assistant program existed in a community supporting other programs, nor was there a

formal survey of the local legal community conducted to determine the development of a course of study.

The Program objectives include provision of qualified para-professionals to the legal community and quality education to residents of the Oakland Community College district who desire employment as legal assistants. It is also the objective of the Program to contribute as a community college to the economical and efficient delivery of legal services for the private and public sectors of the community served by the institution.

Oakland Community College awards both an Associate Degree in Applied Science with a major in the Legal Assistant Program and a Paralegal Certificate of Proficiency.

The Program is contained within the Department of Business Administration at the Orchard Ridge campus and is administered by directors responsible to the chair-person of the Business Administration Department, Dave Adams. Dave Adams reports to the academic dean, who reports to the president of the Orchard Ridge campus, who reports to the Chancellor of OCC, who ultimately reports to the Board of Trustees. At the time of the site visit, J. Michael Kinney was the Program Director reporting to David Adams, the Chair of the Business Administration Department; Sarah Keidan was acting Co-Director working with Michael Kinney in the administration of the Legal Assistant Program.

The Program is represented by George Keith, Campus President, at the meetings of the Board of Trustees. At the time of the site visit, the Program was not taking advantage of many of the services available through the overall administration of the college; the placement department did not interact with the Program and the paralegals, students and graduates were not aware that placement services were available to them.

The Program of Oakland Community College is primarily funded through tuition; 58% of the funding for the 91-92 academic year was derived from tuition and the other 42% was derived from state aide. The Program receives instructional supplies, equipment, and library and other support services through an "in-kind" contribution through the Business Administration Department. The commitment and support for the Legal Assistant Program was described by college officials as being strong. Administration assured the site team that instructional supplies, library facilities, equipment, salaries and other Program needs would be met throughout the academic year. The college's commitment insures that, as long as there is student demand for the Program, it will continue to be offered as part of the college curriculum.

The 1994 budget, which was supplied to us in supplemental materials prior to the site visit, indicated a budgeted amount of \$15,000 for part-time management staff. At the time of the site visit, the job of the Program Director was being posted to be filled and the job description for the position was being developed. The amount of time to be devoted to the different aspects of the Program by the director had not been determined.

There is a general operating fund through which funds can be made available to allow the director of the Program to become involved in professional associations such as AAFPE. It was said that support would be available and given to the director to become involved in AAFPE, possibly through attendance at the annual conferences.

G-202

The Chairman of the Department of Business Administration of the Orchard Ridge Campus prepares the budget for that department which includes budgeted amounts for the Program. The number of paralegal (LGL) classes to be offered through the Program is based on past experience and new classes may be open during registration if existing classes for offered courses are full. The revenue for the Program is derived primarily from tuition and the budgetary procedures in place for the Program are similar to budgetary procedures for other programs within the community college.

The Program has comparable status to units of similar size within OCC. At the campus level, the acting directors and faculty of the Program, the Academic Dean and the Chairman of the Business Administration Department each participate in campus-based counsels such as the Academic Senate, Curriculum Committee and other faculty or college-wide organizations.

At the time of the site visit, the college as stated in its Self-Evaluation Report, did not routinely support "full time faculty or directors' salaries for new programs." It was evident to the team during the site visit that the Program offered by OCC is new and in the process of being developed. The budget is determined by the Business Administration Department as the resident academic department for the Program, which estimates enrollments for the following year and recommends a schedule of classes. Full time faculty overload monies and adjunct instructor monies are budgeted for those scheduled classes. Money for director's time was not ordinarily funded, but was handled by separate, supplemental contracting through the Dean's budget, based on "a time-on-task basis."

G-203

The Program has an advisory committee consisting of thirteen members. Of the thirteen members the majority are directly associated with Oakland Community College. The members of the advisory committee are nominated by the Chair of the Department of Business Administration and appointed by the Campus President. Appointments to the advisory committee are generally for one year. Members are eligible for reappointment. The thirteen members of the advisory committee include four practicing attorneys (two of whom are the co-directors of the Program and two of whom teach in the Program), one judge, one current OCC legal assistant student, two OCC program graduates, the Chair of the Department of Business Administration, the co-directors of the Legal Assistant Program

at the time of the site visit who are also both attorneys, the President of Orchard Ridge Campus Oakland Community College and three individuals involved in administrative positions in the legal community including a representative of the public sector.

In the Self-Evaluation Report, David Adams, Chair of the Department of Business Administration, was listed as Chairperson of the committee. According to the advisory committee minutes, however, Mike Kinney, one of the co-directors at the time of the site visit, chaired and conducted the meetings. The meetings were held informally with no set schedule prior to December, 1993 and, at the time of the site visit, a more formal advisory committee structure had just been implemented. The advisory committee was formed in 1989. Prior to that time an ad hoc committee met and acted as the advisory committee for the Program.

The members of the advisory committee of the Program are enthusiastic about and seem committed to the Program and to its students and graduates. They also appear to be interested in the activities of the Program and in developing the paralegal profession in the local legal community. Members of the advisory board either have been or plan to become involved in such projects as the evaluation of the curriculum and course content for the Program, the development of student internships and job placement, the staffing of instructors for the Program, the evaluation of the Program as a whole, and in surveying the community concerning the local utilization of paralegals.

The site visit team noted that a significant number of the members of the advisory board were involved with the Program as instructors. The team recommended that in the future the director strive to achieve diverse representation of the legal community on the advisory board and that members be added to the board from the community who are involved in the local bar associations, the local law firms and corporate law departments who are potential employers of paralegals and that an effort be made through the advisory board to integrate the Program into the community as a whole to a greater degree.

The team also suggested the use of sub-committees of the advisory board which could be formed to help with specific projects such as graduate surveys, curriculum review and the organization of an alumni association. The team also advised the co-directors that the advisory board must meet on a regular basis and suggested alternative ways in which this might be accomplished should luncheon or breakfast meetings not always be possible.

G-204

As a public institution, Oakland Community College has a strong interest in providing education to all minorities in the community. Separate statistics for enrollment of paralegal students by racial and ethnic category were available under the board description of minority versus non-minority in the supplemental information provided to the team prior to the site visit. There have been 11 minority graduates and 109 non-minority graduates from the

Program to date. This differs slightly from the breakdown of graduates by gender which totalled 136 female graduates and 4 male graduates for a total of 140 as opposed to a total of 120 reflected in the minority breakdown.

Women are fairly well represented on the faculty which at the current time has no minority members. The site team suggested that minority instructors for the Program be added to the faculty and that the Program be marketed to the local minority communities through the minority bar associations and through other minority organizations affiliated with the legal community.

G-205

Salaries for the faculty of the Program are adequate. Within the department, funds for printing and supplies are probably adequate as well. The 1993-94 budget supplied to the site visit team prior to the visit did not reflect funds for the library, nor were funds specifically reflected for the salaries of the acting directors. A proposed 1994-95 budget was given to us during the site visit which reflected a part time salary of \$15,000 for the director and additional funds for support and supplies for the Program.

As previously stated, prior to the actual creation of the position of Program Director, which was posted to be filled in July 1994, one month after the site visit, money for a director's time was not ordinarily funded, but was handled by a separate, supplemental contracting through the dean's budget based on a time-on-task basis. A part time director's salary of \$15,000 was included in the proposed budget for 1994-95 and this may be increased as the amount of time the director of the Program will devote to various duties is determined. During the 1993-94 academic year, student assistance support was supplied to the Program, and as of May, 1994, the college allocated funds to the Program for part time secretarial support, and a part time secretary was hired to work 12 hours per week for the Program, Monday through Thursday. The Program seems to have adequate secretarial support.

As will be more fully developed in Section G-601, students in the Program primarily utilize the Oakland County Law Library, which is available to them. The local library collection is minimally adequate under the guidelines and is not supported by a specific line item in the budget.

Placement, admissions, counseling and library services are available through the main administration of the college without allocation by department or major. Placement, as will be developed subsequently, is not specifically available to paralegals or to those enrolled in the Program for placement within their field and the representative of the OCC Placement Office with whom the team met was not familiar with the specific placement needs of paralegal students and graduates.

No special funds are now allocated within the paralegal budget for research, evaluation or professional development of faculty. As indicated below in G-301, the Program must engage in more regular, concerted follow up of graduates and employers. Funds should be allocated so that these functions become a permanent, institutionalized part of the operation of the Program.

To summarize, resources in some areas are adequate, but in others greater support may be required for the Program to comply with the recommendations in this report. The team recommends that in particular more administrative and perhaps financial support should be given for surveys and follow up of graduates and employers.

SECTION III: EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

G-301

Oakland Community College offers a two-year program leading to an Associate in Applied Science degree as a Legal Assistant and a certificate program. A total of 62 credit hours is required for the degree and 40 credit hours for the certificate.

During classroom observations by the site visit team and in meetings with present Legal Assistant students and program graduates it was evident that the instructors emphasize reasoning and the understanding of underlying principles as well as demonstrating and requiring practical applications.

The Program co-directors and the advisory committee have responded to a perceived need to add legal specialty courses but have not initiated any surveys or studies which would provide meaningful input. The college should initiate appropriate research and surveys to arrive at findings which will enable the advisory committee and the appropriate college-wide curriculum committee to substantiate proposed changes, as required by G-301 of the guidelines.

An organized plan for review and evaluation of the total program is not in place. At the time of the site visit, there was no continuing process in place for the evaluation and use of graduate and employee surveys as required by G-301 of the guidelines.

The ethical and professional standards of the legal assistant and of the attorney are currently incorporated into two of the courses offered by the Program, but the direction to do so should be included in every appropriate legal specialty course syllabus, as mandated by G-301 and G-106 of the guidelines.

G-302

The program is generalized in nature, though arguably it might be considered an extended trial practice course with several appropriate divisions. The sole substantive law course is a survey course and is entitled LGL 204, Substantive Law. However, guideline G-302 is clearly met as to the legal specialty offerings.

That aspect of the guideline as it relates to transferable general education and elective courses is also in compliance. There are 14 elective hours, 18 highly transferable General Education required hours, Business Law I and II are mandatory, and a word processing or personal computer application course is also required.

G-303

A description of the degree curriculum follows:

General Education	Credit Hours
ENG 151 Composition I	3
ENG 152 Composition II	3
SPE 129 Interpersonal Communications	
or	
SPE 161 Fundamentals of Speech	3
POL 151 American Government	3
Math/Science Elective (Courses are 3, 4 or 5 hours; carried at minimum)	3
Social Science Elective (Courses are 3 or 4 hours; carried at minimum)	<u>3</u>
Total	18
Legal Specialty Courses: Required	
LGL 200 Legal Research I	3
LGL 201 Discovery	2
LGL 202 Litigation	4
LGL 203 Legal Research II	3
LGL 204 Substantive Law	4
LGL 205 Preparation of Evidence	2
LGL 206 Trial Preparation	<u>3</u>
Total	21

Legal Specialty Courses: Electives

BIS 109 Introduction to Legal Office Environment - 2 credits
LGL 251 Legal Assistant Internship - 3 credits

Additional required courses:

BUS 203	Business Law I	3
BUS 204	Business Law II	3
BIS 107	Introduction to Word Processing (3 hours)	
or		
CIS 105	Personal Computer Applications (4 hours) (Carried at minimum.)	<u>3</u>
Total		9
Additional elective requirements:		<u>14</u>

TOTAL 62

The Fine Arts/Humanities Elective (with a minimum of 3 credit hours required for the Applied Science Degree) includes several courses which do not comply with G-303 F. However, the 18 General Education credit hour requirement is fulfilled without this elective.*

The certificate program:

Legal Specialty Courses (as stated above)	21	
CIS 105	Personal Computer Applications	4
BUS 203	Business Law I	3
BUS 204	Business Law II	3
ENG 151	Composition I	3
ENG 152	Composition II	3
SPE 129	Interpersonal Communication	
or		
SPE 161	Fundamentals of Speech	<u>3</u>
TOTAL		40

The college accepts the general education credits of transfer students from colleges accredited by the North Central Association of Colleges if the grade is "C" or better. The current (1993-94) catalog provides that students who enter with a bachelors degree "or other significant education with work experience may, with the approval of the department, be granted a Legal Assistant Certificate" upon completion of the legal specialty courses and six other specified courses. The college recently (November 1993, page 53B of Self-Evaluation Report) outlined minimum objective guidelines for prospective transfer students, as

anticipated by G-501 (c) of the guidelines. It has not been made clear, however, that the catalog will state that the same standards will be applied to degree candidates as well as certificate candidates who are transferees.

The college reports there have been no waivers of the General Education requirement in connection with Legal Assistant students and a spot review of twelve graduate files at the site confirmed this statement.

The acceptance of legal specialty courses from other North Central Association colleges is clearly stated in the current catalog, as anticipated by G-501 (d), but the criteria for acceptance of credits from other colleges, including proprietary schools, is not stated.

The catalog (1993-94) does not contain the legal restriction on the practice of law required in G-501, Evaluative Criteria A.

SECTION IV: FACULTY

G-401

J. Michael Kinney, full time faculty and an attorney, has been sole Program Director from 1989 until 1993 when Sarah W. Keidan, full time faculty and an attorney, became co-director. There are seven adjunct faculty. The Fall and Winter terms are fifteen weeks in length, and the Spring and Summer terms are each seven and one-half weeks in length. Mrs. Keidan's teaching assignments have varied, averaging two courses per academic year. Mr. Kinney has been the internship instructor (LGL 251, an elective course) each term it has been offered, which has been three of the four per year. Both Mr. Kinney and Ms. Keidan teach the business law sequence.

The adjunct faculty for the Legal Specialty courses are all attorneys or judges and are effective, according to student input at the time of the site visit and from available faculty evaluations. Several are very active in the use of paralegals, including acting as the site for the Legal Assistant interns. It is recommended that continuous faculty evaluations be solicited from the students.

G-402

The co-directors of the program have shared the program responsibilities since that 1993, but their areas of responsibility have not been clearly defined, nor have all of the Program responsibilities outlined in G-402 been addressed. The college had identified the deficiency and is currently addressing this area. The college is preparing an appropriate job description, has made provision for funding the position, and expects to fill the position of Director of

the Program in time for the Fall 1994 term. At this time G-402 is not in compliance. In particular, Evaluative Criteria A, B, C, E, G, H and J of G-402 are not presently acceptable.

G-403

The size of the faculty is adequate considering the number and types of courses, sections and the registration figures. A review of the faculty resumes and personal contact at the time of the site visit, with the two full-time and five of the seven adjunct faculty demonstrate professional competence, experience with legal assistants and encouragement of professional growth. The salary and other benefits are comparable to that of other faculty within the college. Funds are available to the full-time faculty for professional growth, and several of the adjunct are very active in the legal environment, where their respective business funds support their endeavors. Administrative support is provided by sharing a full-time secretary for approximately ten hours a week, with additional support available as needed and requested.

SECTION V: ADMISSION AND STUDENT SERVICES

G-501

Oakland Community College has an open door admission policy. Admission to credit studies is open to all high school graduates, transfer students, and persons 18 years of age or older who have graduated from high school. There are no other defined requirements for admission to the Legal Assistant Program than those described above.

Oakland Community College also offers a "certificate of completion" from the Legal Assistant Program. The selection procedure for applicants is based on prior academic record, ability to proceed with college-level coursework, and the desire to obtain a degree in the legal assistant field or job enhancement.

It is felt by the team that the parameters of the Program should be more clearly defined. With undefined parameters, there is a potential for prospective students to enroll without having a clear understanding of the requirements to successfully complete their course of study.

G-502

Orientation to the Program and the legal assistant profession is handled through the admissions process, informal sessions with students, introductory courses, descriptive literature, college catalog, meeting with the Program Director and students, meetings with counselors, focus groups, etc. Oakland Community College conducts an orientation session

for all new students at the beginning of the fall term of each year and all new students to the Legal Assistant Program are encouraged to attend.

An orientation program specifically for those students currently enrolled in or interested in the Legal Assistant Program is currently offered. The orientation includes presentations by the Program Directors, students and graduates of the Program as well as current faculty. This orientation to the Legal Assistant Program offered at Oakland Community College should continue to be offered and is encouraged by the members of the team.

While Oakland Community College has a Placement Services Office which is designed to assist students in their search for part and full-time employment, there is virtually no coordination between that office and the Program Director. It is stated in the Self-Evaluation Report submitted by Oakland Community College that "to this point we have not felt the need to develop an intensive, extensive job placement procedure because the number of program graduates has been so small". The establishment of a placement procedure for those in the Legal Assistant Program is a mandatory requirement for ABA approval. The mere fact that the number of graduates of the Program is small does not exclude a program. Each graduate is as important as the next and the ultimate goal should be the successful placement of graduates. Oakland Community College's program is currently lacking in this criteria. The team encourages OCC to establish a placement procedure for its Legal Assistant Program graduates and also encourages interaction between the Placement Services Office and the Program Director. Education of those in the Placement Services Office as to the role of a legal assistant will also ensure appropriate placement.

The team also encourages the Program Director to use the resources available through the Institutional Planning and Analysis Department in developing the appropriate statistics for the Legal Assistant Program. To date, these statistics are virtually non-existent.

Oakland Community College offers a variety of student organizations - special interest groups, social organizations, and service organization - which exist to meet the diverse needs of its students. The Legal Eagles is stated to be an established student organization of legal assistant program students. Neither the current students nor graduates of the Program which the team spoke were involved in said student organization. They could offer no insight as to the purpose of said organization. The team encourages the Program Director to develop the Legal Eagles into a viable organization for its students to allow for networking, guest speakers in areas of interest, and a means for students to keep current of trends in the profession.

G-503

Oakland Community College allows students who desire to take a course without credit to choose to audit the course by paying full tuition and fees. Students desiring to audit may do so at time of registration.

There is no current policy prohibiting non-degree students or students pursuing degrees in other areas from registering for legal assistant courses. The portion of such students in legal specialty courses is approximately 3%.

SECTION VI: LIBRARY

G-601

The law section of the Oakland Community College Orchard Ridge Campus library has been specifically set up to serve the needs of the Legal Assistant Program.

In addition to OCC's library, students also have available to them the Oakland County Law Library. While the drive to the library seemed a bit much to the team, it was obviously the library of choice for students and graduates of the Program. The hours of availability were sufficient to meet the needs of the students of the Program. These two library facilities available to students have all the necessary legal research and reference materials for students to complete a given task. The combination of both libraries include all those law books referenced in G-601(A)(3). The guidelines set forth in Section G-601(A) are met.

Students receive instruction in the proper use of the library in LGL 200, Legal Research I and LGL 203, Legal Research II.

SECTION VII: PHYSICAL PLANT

G-701

The Orchard Ridge Campus is situated on 147 acres. The complex of 13 buildings currently serves over 7,500 students. A community activities building provides recreation and community activities.

Currently, 9 classrooms are assigned to the Business Administration Department and legal assistant courses are scheduled into these classrooms and other classrooms throughout the campus based on availability.

As previously indicated, there are 2 full time faculty, 7 part time or adjunct faculty and secretarial support is provided for the Department of Business Administration. Full time

faculty have private offices located within the same building as the classrooms and are easily accessible to students, adjunct faculty and staff.

The learning resources center, which is available to all students registered at Oakland Community College, contains library material such as video tapes, audio tapes, films, slides and transparencies as well as books and periodicals. Librarians are on duty to assist and instruct students. The library hours are usually from 8:00 a.m. until 9:00 p.m. weekdays and a half day on Saturdays.

The individual instruction center provides assistance to students who need reinforcement in academic areas to students who are experiencing difficulty in their course work. Tutors are also available upon request from students in the Legal Assistant Program who are having academic difficulty.

Oakland Community College students, as previously stated, use the Oakland County Bar Library as a source for extensive legal research and Oakland County courtrooms are used for course classrooms and mock trials.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Paralegal Program of Oakland Community College has the potential to become a good paralegal program. The members of the faculty of the Program are very committed as are the co-directors, Mike Kinney and Sarah Keidan. The site visit team was especially impressed with the dedication and enthusiasm of the co-directors for the Program and of the faculty for the students and for the potential of the Program. There is clearly a desire to offer a quality program and it was apparent to the team that the college is moving in the right direction in order to create a program that will serve its graduates and the community.

However, it was also apparent to the site visit team that our visit was premature. While the Program is gaining in structure and appears to be moving toward becoming one which will provide services to its graduates and to the community, it was the judgment of the site visit team that the Program did not comply with the requirements of several of the Guidelines at the time of the site visit and that ABA approval can not be granted at this time. It is the recommendation of the site visit team that another site visit be scheduled no sooner than one year from the time of the initial site visit and that consideration of ABA approval for the Legal Assistant Program of Oakland Community College be deferred until such time as the proposed structure and curriculum for the Program has been in place a sufficient period of time for evaluation.

This recommendation is based principally upon the fact that, at the time of the site visit conducted in June of 1994, there was no program director in place for the Program. The job description for the Program Director was being developed and the position of Director

had been posted, but not filled. The Program of OCC was not found to be in compliance with guidelines G201, G-202, G-401 or G-402.

Additionally, the Legal Assistant Program of Oakland Community College offered no formal career counseling or placement for its legal assistant students and graduates. It was specifically stated in the Self-Evaluation Report that, at the time the report was prepared, the administration of the Program had not felt the need to develop a job placement procedure because the number of program graduates had been so small. The site visit team did not find a well organized plan for counseling and advising students and assisting graduates in securing suitable employment as is required by G-502.

It was the finding of the site visit team that there were no adequate records or surveys tracking the job histories of graduates and very little knowledge as to the ultimate placement of graduates who successfully completed the Program. Concerning student input, the site visit team found that the faculty evaluations by the students were not sufficient and should be enhanced and made an integral part of the evaluation of the Program faculty. (G502) There was no evidence of an organized plan for review and evaluation of the total program. (G-301) It was suggested by the site visit team that graduate surveys, needs assessment surveys and general follow up of the professional experience of graduates in the community could be used to further structure the Program and to develop curriculum to meet the needs of employers in the community and to aide in the professional development of the students and graduates. It was the determination of the team that the Program was not in compliance with ABA guideline G502.

With respect to the advisory board, it is the suggestion of the site visit team that the board be given formalized structure, that the members of the advisory board be given specific duties and that the board meet on a regular basis, at least two times per year. It is also the suggestion of the site visit team that the director of the Program have direct input as to the appointment of the members of the advisory board and that this be a cooperative function with the president of the college who is currently responsible for appointing members to the advisory board.

Further, it is the suggestion of the site visit team that the advisory board be broadened to include members from the community who are not also involved with the Program. It was specifically suggested that local bar associations, law firms and corporate departments be solicited for support and members of the advisory board, and that the advisory board be utilized to aide in the integration of the Program into the community.

It was also the understanding of the site visit team that a brochure was being developed by OCC for public distribution which would include information relating to the objectives of the Program. It was suggested that the director of the Program interact with the local bar associations and the local legal assistant associations in developing such a brochure and in publicizing the Program within the community.

As called for by G-201, it is the suggestion of the site visit team that the degree and certificate requirements of the Program be clearly defined. The site visit team found the requirements confusing in the brochure and in the literature and suggested that clarification as to requirements for successful entry into and for completion of each course of study be made.

Major revisions to the Program's curriculum were being considered at the time of the site visit, but had not been finalized or implemented. With respect to the curriculum, it is the suggestion of the site visit team that specific courses be developed through a needs assessment process. It was also suggested that students be given input into the development of practice area courses. As required in guideline G-301, it was the suggestion that a specific ethics course be created or that ethics be more specifically addressed in the courses taught in the Program so that all legal assistant students will receive instruction in ethics.

It was suggested by the team that minority faculty members and students be recruited into the Program. It was also suggested that local practicing legal assistants be utilized as guest speakers in various courses in order to introduce an element of practical application.

The material submitted as part of the Program's Self-Evaluation Report reflected that there was a student organization referred to as Legal Eagles. During the site visit, it was learned that Legal Eagles had been disbanded and that many of the students in fact were not aware that it had ever existed. It is the suggestion of the site team that Legal Eagles be reinstated and that an effort be made to encourage those students in the Program to join the local legal assistant organizations and to form their own organization which would be available to alumni as well and would give an opportunity to the students to interact with those legal assistants who are professionally employed in the community.

To summarize, the site visit team makes the following recommendations:

1. The Program Director when appointed should have a formal job description which complies with the guidelines and should have adequate support from the administration of the college. (G-202, G-401, G-402)
2. The Program Director should actively use the resources of the college and should interact with the appropriate college departments concerning the evaluation of the Program, the curriculum of the Program and the placement of the students and graduates of the Program. (G-201, G-402)
3. Needs assessment surveys, graduate surveys and employer surveys should be routinely utilized to further develop, review and evaluate the Program and to track the experiences and progress of the students and graduates. (G-502)
4. Student placement and graduate follow up procedures specific to the Program should be developed, utilized and routinely evaluated. (G-301, G-502)

5. The need for specific courses should be evaluated with input from the students and from the local legal community and practice area courses should be developed to be included in the curriculum of the Program. (G-301, G-302)
6. Published brochures, which will be disseminated to the public by OCC, should include information concerning the objectives of the Program and language concerning the definition of a legal assistant. (G-201)
7. Formalized instruction of ethics should be included in the Program instruction in such a way so as to insure that all students receive ethics instruction. (G-301)
8. The advisory board should be broadened to include members of the community who are not currently associated with the college and whose inclusion will integrate the Program into the community and provide additional resources for the development of the Program's curriculum and the placement of the Program's students and graduates. (G-203)
9. Faculty members and students should be recruited from the minority community through interaction with minority bar associations, local law firms and corporations. (G-204)
10. OCC catalog information should be revised to clarify the criteria of the Program for receiving a certificate; the criteria of the Program for receiving an AA degree; and to clarify the course criteria to insure that the curriculum requirements of the ABA guidelines are met. The catalog should also include the legal restriction on the practice of law. (G-302, G-303)

It is further suggested that the Program Director be encouraged to network with other program directors and be given the support by the administration of the college to become associated with the American Association of Paralegal Educators.

The site team also suggests that attempts be made to reactivate the student association formerly known as Legal Eagles.